

Bound by Blood

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Bound by Blood

by [Metaphysicalash](#)

Summary

CEO Hannibal/Secretary Will AU

Hannibal caught the blue gaze of the man, picking up on his aura quite instantly. First impressions were everything to Hannibal and this man gave a hell of an impression without uttering a word.

“I hope I’m not intruding,” the man spoke, the least bit fazed by him. Not a shred of nervousness.

The corners of Hannibal’s mouth curved up into a slight smile as his eyes skimmed over the man’s features, registering those blue eyes looking right into his soul, those red lips, and the short waves of chocolate hair. He imagined what it would be like to feel those unbelievably soft strands between his fingers.

“Will Graham,” Hannibal said. “Please have a seat.”

Will is the new secretary that seems different from the rest and Hannibal is instantly taken to him. But facades are deceptive and it becomes apparent that both Hannibal and Will have secrets. Hannibal isn't what he seems and neither is Will. Their conflicting secrets causes their worlds to collide, and Hannibal's obsession might lead him down a road he cannot return from. When something feels too good to be true, it most likely is.

Notes

I've been wanting to write a CEO Hannibal/secretary Will Graham AU for a long time. Finally got the chance to. No betas, so all errors are mine. I did not get the time to edit it, so apologies for any inconsistencies.

Please MIND the tags, and hope you enjoy the fic.

Please note: I work as a writer and so my schedule is always busy for the most part of the day. I will try to update the chapters every week or so. Please be patient <3

Happy reading

The Mundane Over The Morbid





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The panoramic view of the city never got old for Hannibal. He liked being on top, in every sense of the word. Only he knew the truth behind his enterprise's growth, and Machiavellian maneuvers he employed. He could play fair, but where was the fun in that? He was a former psychiatrist, and thinking about the way he used his psychiatric prowess to pull the strings in his company made him smirk even now.

He might think he never showed-off the fact that half the city's advanced infrastructure, and the high-speed maglev trains running around were all built by his company, but that wasn't the case. His pride often flaunted itself like a peacock. He couldn't have gotten where he was without being a bit nefarious at times. It would surprise no one if Hannibal bought an entire island with a resort on it, considering the money he made. He was capable of anything.

Yet, all the glistening high-rises and the flamboyant luxury didn't exactly fill all the voids in his life. It did bore him at times even though he loved living the high-life. There was one particular gaping void that tormented him up until now.

Solitude.

He sat in his seat, rotating slowly towards the windows as he twirled a pen in his hand. His life lacked taste. Of course that taste was *mostly* fulfilled by his late night... hunts. He wanted more, but he didn't know what exactly. He'd hoped that whatever he was missing would show up in front of him the way everything else in his life did—on a silver platter. Figuratively.

A bunch of blueprints for a new residential complex were laid out in front of him, but he paid no attention to it. Not when his face was fixed in a contemplative gaze at the cityscape. A brief knock on the door snapped Hannibal out of his reverie. He glanced at the doorway as the door opened and Alana Bloom stepped through the threshold, elegant as ever in her red formal dress and black blazer. Her high heels clacked on the floor as she walked towards Hannibal.

"Your new candidate is here," she said. "Shall I bring him up?"

"My potential secretary, if he possesses the right qualities," Hannibal replied.

Alana half-smiled. "That's what you said about the last twenty candidates, and then kicked them out merely ten seconds into the interview. You didn't even give them the opportunity to

prove themselves.”

Hannibal twirled the pen near his head. “That’s because it takes ten seconds for me to figure out if they’re the perfect fit. I waste no time, Alana. I’m adept at reading people.”

“I’m sure. But I’d like to think this next one will prove a match.”

Hannibal gave her a side-glance. “You seem confident.”

Alana smiled. “That’s because I know him well. It’s the very reason I referred him to you.”

“Yes.” Hannibal dropped the pen and picked up the candidate profile in front of him. “Will Graham. The only fascinating mystery is why a former FBI agent would be interested in a lackluster job such as this.”

“Maybe you need to ask him that yourself.”

She left and a couple of minutes later, a man stepped in. By his mere presence alone, he grabbed all of Hannibal’s attention. Hannibal caught the blue gaze of the man, picking up on his aura quite instantly. First impressions were everything to Hannibal and this man gave a hell of an impression without uttering a word. It was as though his mere presence stopped time.

“I hope I’m not intruding,” the man spoke, his voice soft, bit rough around the edges in a provocative way. He was absolutely unfazed by Hannibal. Not a shred of fear as the other candidates had.

The corners of Hannibal’s mouth curved up into a slight smile as his eyes skimmed over the man’s features, registering those blue eyes looking right into his soul, those red lips, and the short waves of chocolate hair. He imagined what it would be like to feel those unbelievably soft strands between his fingers.

“Will Graham,” Hannibal said. “Please have a seat.”

Will hung his coat on the seat across the table from him, and sat down, spreading his legs wide. Hannibal registered that too. The way his eyes shamelessly darted to Will’s crotch even if it was for a split-second, was beyond his control.

“My only question to you is why you would leave a challenging job such as yours to become a secretary,” Hannibal said. “You look like a man who prefers the morbid over the mundane.”

“Then you don’t know me at all. Sometimes the mundane is exactly the kind of escape I need.”

“What are you escaping from?”

Will tilted his head. “Myself.”

Hannibal leaned forward, placing his intertwined hands on the table. “And you thought becoming a secretary would relieve you from the nightmare of your former job? In that case,

you could pick any prosaic job in any company.”

“I could, but Alana insisted I come here. She was very persistent, and something about you struck me as... interesting, Mr. Lecter. Or Doctor Lecter, if you prefer.”

Hannibal smirked. “I get the feeling you did your homework, Mr. Graham—”

“Will is fine.”

“Will. Why wouldn’t you do your homework? You’re a profiler. It’s part of your job description. And even if you’re no longer a profiler, the habit stays.”

“It does. You’re right, I know all about you. Or at least, everything you choose to present to the world.”

“What’s your impression of me?”

“Too early to say. You’re inscrutable.” Will smiled slightly. “But I love a challenge.”

The smile on Hannibal’s face stretched to a grin. "I get the feeling asking you about the company would be a ridiculous question. If you're always aware of the people around you, it's safe to say you already know everything there is to know about the company."

"You don't look like a man I'd take for being the CEO of an advanced tech company."

"Why is that?"

"Not sure. Just a feeling."

"Your feelings seem to hit the mark, Will. I admit my choice of occupation is a rather huge deviation from my past experiences. I'd be happy to have you as my new secretary. Hopefully, whatever you learn about me would impress you."

Will's eyes narrow just slightly, like he was trying to see right through Hannibal's exterior. "Like I said, you're interesting."

Hannibal did impose a certain judgment on the previous candidates. But Will had a certain charm, an astuteness. Hannibal felt a bit biased towards him, even if he didn't admit it.

"Welcome aboard, Mr. Graham." He let a hand out.

As Will shook his hand, Hannibal couldn’t resist brushing his forefinger over the veins in Will’s wrist, feeling the rhythmic throbbing of his pulse. His hand was warm. Something about Will enticed him. It could be one reason why he selected him to be his secretary.

"I look forward to working with you... sir," Will said, smirking a little. "Shall I get started today?"

Hannibal felt an invigorating rush of adrenaline just hearing him call him 'sir'. "You may."

The younger man rose from his chair. "I wonder why you gave up psychiatry."

"I loved the profession, but... I wanted to try my hand at new endeavors. I do miss being a psychiatrist, however, I do not regret where I am today."

"So, here I am, searching for the mundane while you're running far away from it."

"The mundane is unbearable, Will. What's life without a little chaos?"

Will smirked. "And the agenda for today?"

"Oh, you know, the archetypal gathering of the board of directors for a meeting that mostly entails convincing them of potential growth plans for the company which they are bound to nitpick and then question my abilities to make financial profits."

"I presume that requires a lot of mental preparation."

"I've grown used to it. Or rather, I think I have. I would be lying if I said their limited intellect didn't strike every single one of my nerves sometimes." Hannibal smiles as he rounds the desk and walks to Will. "But I'm lucky you will be by my side. Your welcome presence might offer me some respite."

Will followed Hannibal to the conference room, to a group of bumptious suited men seated around a long table. Will could sense the air of conceitedness in the room, so thick he could cut it with a knife. He used to be an FBI profiler so from the mere demeanor of the directors in the room, he quickly understood Hannibal's position, even empathizing with him.

"May I introduce you all to my newest secretary, Mr. Will Graham?" Hannibal gestured to Will while smiling at the directors. "He will be a part of our operations and a valuable asset." He takes a seat at the head of the table while Will sits adjacent to him. "I believe you are all already aware of my plans for the company. It seems sustainable living is the way to the future, so I've already drawn out blueprints for what they call 'smart buildings', so to speak."

One of the directors spoke up, "Are you talking about the whole smart lighting... automated climate control or something of the sort."

"Something of the sort, Mr. Burnham, yes."

Burnham visibly sighed. "I get your sustainability goals or whatever, but we're looking at returns. And immediate ones."

Hannibal maintains his composure even though this insipid argument irked him a bit. "I'm aiming for long-term gains. It would be beneficial for the advancement of our company."

The directors all share the same expression of disapproval. Will quickly learned that they simply cared about what they got in return, and how fast they got it. Things like sustainability and long-term gains were tedious to them.

"We're starting to doubt your abilities, Mr. Lecter," Burnham said.

Hannibal simply smirked, masking his growing vexation within. He'd faced this a dozen times and he wished it wouldn't mess with his head. "I have always done what was best for the company. I can assure you—"

"No, what you have done is chase after big, glorious dreams like they all do. It all sounds nice in your head, Mr. Lecter, but it's time to get back to reality and focus on what we get in return rather than cater to some wild fantasy and watch the company fall."

Another director, Gordon, chimed in. "Starting to wonder if it might be a good idea to join our rivals."

Hannibal gripped the fountain pen tighter in his hand, trying to get his self-restraint back. As he was about to answer, he was cut off.

"Why didn't you?" Will's voice sounded.

All eyes fell on him.

Gordon turned to face Will. "Excuse me?"

"Why didn't you join the competitors?" Will asked, rather nonchalantly. "If you think they're so much better, you would've done it already. Why stick around? Unless you know that this company always did better than them, and so instead of admitting that, you would much rather put it down in a desperate attempt to sound wise."

Gordon's face hardened as he scowled at Will. "Who the hell—"

Will turned his focus to Burnham. "And Mr. Burnham, you're so obsessed with getting immediate profits that you don't care about the future of the company. You don't care about having long-term growth that would benefit everyone and actually increase our returns, which means we would still be standing and thriving while our so-called rivals fade away. You getting your instant profits might lead to the company's downfall and if that happens, it's certain that you would put the blame on Mr. Lecter's abilities yet again and demand your losses be compensated. That's how you and this Janus-faced board of directors work."

The room erupted into a chorus of angry voices all targeted at Will.

"Who the fuck are you to make judgments?" Burnham exclaimed. "You are nothing but a secretary."

Hannibal, now thoroughly amused and impressed, sat there with a smug smile on his face, looking at Will with greater admiration. He could've intervened and defused the situation but it brought him immense joy just watching the directors explode. Unfortunately for him, he had to eventually step in otherwise it could cause problems.

"Calm down, please," he said. "It's no use pointing fingers. You are all here because you expect profits. You will get what you're owed."

"We better get it, Mr. Lecter," Burnham spat, then gestured to Will. "And better get your dog under control."

Will gave an unfazed smile. "I'll take that as a compliment. Dogs are the best. I think I might be more of a... German Shepherd."

Burnham stared at his audacity. And just like that, as if he and Gordon owed Hannibal nothing more than those peremptory words, they all stood in unison and made their way out like ants. Or at least, that was what Hannibal thought of them.

He stopped them with his voice just as they reached the threshold. "Mr. Burnham, Mr. Gordon, may I speak with you for a moment?"

While the rest of the directors exited the room, Burnham and Gordon took a seat.

"I would like you both to join me for a discussion this evening," Hannibal said. "You may express your expectations for the profits and we can come up with a plan that may benefit all three of us."

Burnham and Gordon glanced at each other before looking at Hannibal.

"And why are we the only ones you're telling this to?" Burnham asked.

"Because the two of you are senior directors," Hannibal replied. "And because you had the most concerns than anyone else, which is why, I would like us to collaborate for the sake of the company. Evening, say... seven PM?"

The two men remained silent, exchanging glances again as if having a conversation through telepathy. Burnham took a deep breath, puffing out his chest before giving Hannibal a nod.

"Very well," he said.

Hannibal gave a nod as well. "I have a conference room on the tenth floor that will be best suited for our meeting. It's private and nobody will interrupt us."

"Fine, whatever."

The two men rose and walked out of the conference room.

Will gave a half-smile. "I am certain I wouldn't have the forbearance to endure that everyday for ten years."

"It was always different faces that I had to endure," Hannibal said. "Fortunately for me, they don't last long."

"How so?"

"They quit the company."

"Isn't that a bad thing?"

"A new director can be hired. It never dampened the growth of the company."

Hannibal stood and gave Will an acknowledging nod for his intervention earlier. "I do appreciate your support, Will."

"Isn't that what a secretary is supposed to do?" Will returned the smile.

Hannibal's pulse increased at that smile. It was a work of art on its own. He also took note of the way Will's eyes glimmered when he smiled.

"Should I be joining you in that private meeting?" Will asked.

"It will be a confidential meeting between the three of us and I've already convinced them that we wouldn't be interrupted, so you may go ahead and leave by six."

"Alright."

As Will turned to leave, Hannibal stopped him.

"Wait. On second thoughts, Mr. Graham, wait for me here. I won't be long. We can leave together."

*Mr. Graham?*

Surely it was nothing. Hannibal was his boss, essentially, so he could call Will whatever he wanted. But Will was—or used to be—a profiler, and he was dubious of every trivial thing until he was certain it was a false alarm. Hannibal's switch from Will to Mr. Graham seemed to make him feel awkward for some reason.

That evening at seven, Hannibal was busy in the meeting and Will had no choice but to bide his time in Hannibal's office.

He sighed and sat down on the couch, going through his phone, browsing the web and reading TattleCrime. He gave a soft scoff when he saw the articles by Freddie Lounds, always putting her nose into dangerous businesses and getting too deep when she shouldn't. She claimed the FBI had captured the Chesapeake Ripper.

"Abel Gideon?" Will muttered, his brows knitting together, peering closely at the grainy photograph of the supposed Ripper as if willing it to come to life. Every part of him suspected this Gideon fellow, and he wished he could go back to the FBI just so he could speak with him.

But that wasn't going to happen anytime soon.

Turning the phone off, Will sighed and rose from the couch, going over to Hannibal's desk to arrange the items on it. He rolled up the blueprints for the residential complex neatly and put them away in one of the bottom drawers of Hannibal's fancy shelves. Hannibal's desk was neat. There wasn't much to rearrange or tidy up. Hell, there wasn't much to tidy up in the entire office.

The marble floor was immaculate. Will glanced at the floor-to-ceiling windows, then the mahogany desk, the fine leather chair, the glossy coffee table with crystal glasses and a

decanter, next to a posh leather sofa. His gaze lifted to the light fixture above, two rings one above the other, casting a warm, calming glow to the room. Hannibal took care of every detail of his office. Perhaps in his own life too.

And yet, some details remained a mystery to Will. Like a book he wanted to discover. Hannibal himself was indecipherable. What lay behind that suave, stoic facade? Those reticent amber eyes? For a moment, Will's mind drifted to Hannibal's smooth dark blond hair, his lips curving into a smile, and his beige suit, before snapping out of it.

After what seemed like an hour, Hannibal's stealthy appearance almost caught Will off guard. He spun around, glancing at the man standing at the doorway of the office.

"I hope you weren't too bored, Will." Hannibal half-smiled. "I apologize for the delay. The meeting stretched longer than I anticipated."

"Where are Burnham and Gordon?" Will asked.

"They left. Shall we leave too?"

"Yes."

Will made sure everything was kept away before grabbing his coat and exiting the office. Hannibal closed the door and locked it, tucking the key in his suit pocket.

"Will you allow me to drive you home?"

"No thanks, I'll catch a cab," Will replied.

Hannibal tilted his head a bit. "Please, I insist."

"Alright... sir."

The 'sir' put a smile on Hannibal's face as he led Will down to the lobby of the building and out to the parking lot. Will got into Hannibal's black sedan, which, in comparison to his ostentatious penthouse office and evidently his ostentatious lifestyle, seemed... modest.

The drive was mostly silent, except for some questions about Will's interests and his former job thrown here and there. Will didn't speak too much about his former job and wanted to keep it that way, even though he could sense Hannibal's curiosity. The silence in the car was surprisingly comfortable. It didn't feel awkward to Will, perhaps because Hannibal did not push him on anything he didn't want to talk about, or didn't force him to talk when he didn't want to.

"You asked me why I was adamant on leaving the FBI," Will said. "It's because I wanted to get away from the noise."

"I suspect the people and the chatter that constantly surround you does get overwhelming sometimes—"

"I meant the noise in my head."

Hannibal glanced at him, his gaze warm with understanding. It wasn't something Will saw with everyone, as if Hannibal's vulnerability was solely for him. Aside from understanding, Will also thought he saw intrigue. Like Hannibal wanted to learn more about him on a profound level.

"Has it worked?" Hannibal asked. "Diverting away from a life of crime to a life of routine?"

Will shook his head. "No."

"Then why do you do it?"

"Because at least I don't have to look at bodies anymore."

"I'm afraid I have to say, Will, that although you may have distanced yourself from the noise, or at least, are trying to, you may have to endure the noise of bumptious businessmen. That's hardly going to provide you any peace of mind."

A smile slowly cracked Will's sullen countenance and he passed a side-eye glance toward Hannibal, who looked back at him with a bigger smile and raised eyebrows. There was a gradual shift, indicating that Will was warming up to Hannibal. The first signs of it showed in the way he relaxed his shoulders and leaned upright in his seat, sitting a bit more casually than before.

It was amazing how Hannibal interrupted Will's train of thought so fast, grounding him in the here and now. It was exactly what Will wanted. A distraction. Anything that would help him in any way from the nightmares.

In that aspect, it wasn't the job that was his escape. It was Hannibal.

Whether that was a good or bad thing remained to be seen.

# **Dance With Me**

## Chapter Notes

The chapter hasn't been edited, so excuse any errors <3





Will held a tablet in his hand checking out the to-do list for the day. He had already quickly grown accustomed to the company's environment, though he didn't speak much to the other colleagues. Some of them didn't mind, but most others thought he was weird. Will had experienced that for the most part of his life, so he didn't give a flying rat's ass about them.

Besides, the only opinion that ever mattered was Hannibal's, and Hannibal already had taken an incredible liking to him. In fact, the other colleagues noticed the extra attention being paid to the new secretary, and some of them were admittedly envious.

Hannibal's office exuded a charm that changed in the day and in the night, like two different personalities. During the day, the sunlight that seeped through the floor-to-ceiling windows with the flowing beige curtains illuminated the room abundantly, making it look like the perfect private nook for a businessman, or even a place two acquaintances could have a conversation with wine or coffee. Will also imagined sitting near the windows with one of the many books on the bookshelves. The office gave an air of professionalism during the day as it should.

During the night, however, the office turned calming and romantic from the warm glow of the ambient lights. At that time, it was somehow no longer an office, but a quiet corner for two lovers to have dinner. Hannibal's eye for aesthetics amazed Will too, but he wouldn't show it.

The books on Hannibal's shelf varied from psychology to culinary to classical literature. There were books on music compositions and music theories. There was a bronze stag statue as well. Botticelli's *Primavera* hung on the wall above the leather sofa. Will would much rather stay in this office alone, reading a book. His idea of a perfect day.

He gathered up some papers for the day's meeting. Hannibal rose from his chair, buttoning his blue plaid suit, passing one of those suave smiles to Will.

"I have to attend a formal gathering this evening at six," he said. "Meet some potential investors. They've also graciously put me in charge of the cuisines. There's no better way to impress than flaunt my culinary expertise."

"I did hear that you are an exceptional chef," Will said. "Some of the managers in the company who've had the pleasure of dining with you talk obsessively of your cooking."

"Obsessively being the word of emphasis. They love to cozy up to me."

Will wouldn't be surprised. Though the managers loved to kiss ass to an irritating degree, Hannibal kept them around because despite their obsequious behavior, they always did their job well. Exceptionally well.

Hannibal took note of Will's wine-red shirt, and his softly groomed hair. The shirt was unbuttoned at the top, giving him a generous peek of Will's collarbone. Whether Will did that deliberately or not was beyond Hannibal's comprehension, but either way, Hannibal liked it a lot. He wished to press his lips to that collarbone.

"I have already prepared everything prior to the gathering, sir," Will said.

"Of course, I don't doubt it at all." Hannibal gestured to the door. "Shall we?"

Will followed Hannibal into the conference room, to the board of directors sitting near the table. It didn't even take a split-second for Will to notice Burnham and Gordon's absence.

Hannibal sat at the head of the table. "It seems Burnham and Gordon will not be joining us?"

"Apparently so," one of the other directors present said. "I just received a text from both of them saying they were feeling under the weather."

"Yes, I received the text too," another director added.

Hannibal nodded. "Then I'm afraid, in that case, we will have to conduct this meeting without them. Shall we begin?"

The directors nodded and Hannibal smiled. But to Will, the entire atmosphere shifted. He stared at the empty seats where Burnham and Gordon were supposed to be seated, unease settling in the pit of his stomach. Something didn't seem right.

He met Hannibal's gaze as the older man smiled at him, and was immediately caught off guard by how unnerving Hannibal's smile was. It was the same one he usually gave Will, but this time, it lacked... warmth. There was a kind of cold darkness glinting in his eyes, not the usual light of affection he would give Will.

Will sensed the shift, no matter how subtle it was, and it threw him off balance. His eyebrows furrowed for a split-second when he looked at Hannibal before easing. He gave a nod and a half-smile.

The man sitting adjacent to him, holding the directors under his control, was not Hannibal.

No, this was someone entirely different.

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Will knew better than to jump to conclusions. Whatever doubts or unease he felt earlier in the day couldn't explain anything. He remained cautious but not overly suspicious. He decided to learn more about Hannibal from a safe distance.

That evening, he held Hannibal's steamed tuxedo by its hanger as he entered the office. Hannibal was buttoning his cuff as he spoke to the receptionist over the phone. "I need you to make sure the office is locked while I'm gone, and if anyone asks for me, tell them I will not be available until tomorrow." He nodded to Will as the younger man entered.

"Yes, sir," the receptionist replied.

Will took in Hannibal's debonair appearance. The pristine white shirt, the black bowtie, and the black trousers that were cinched around his slim waist by a belt. Something about the finer details attracted Will. Hannibal truly had distinct features that made him... *mesmerizing*. As Hannibal faced a mounted mirror on the wall, Will walked up behind him, taking the hanger out of his tuxedo and holding it up as Hannibal slid his arms through the sleeves, and pulled it close to his body.

"How do I look?" Hannibal asked.

Will moved in front of him, adjusting the bow tie and tuxedo, although they didn't really need a lot of adjustment. "You want a second opinion?"

"Why not?"

"You're always brimming with confidence. I never thought you needed anyone's opinion."

"You're right. But I would still like to know what you think of me."

Will met those amber eyes, shining in the ambient light before his gaze dropped to Hannibal's provocatively parting lips for a brief second. It was challenging to look right at them while giving a compliment, so he averted his gaze to the velvet midnight blue tuxedo. "You look wonderful."

Hannibal bowed his head in response. "Thank you, Will."

The proximity was striking. Will had no clue why the fuck he was pretending to adjust the tuxedo when he didn't have to. He wanted to move away but couldn't move. Hannibal's presence held him captive in his spot.

The older man sensed the awkwardness in him, but he brushed it aside, and took a deep inhale of Will's scent when he stood so close. Barring the atrocious aftershave, he smelled so sweet.

So delectable.

Unable to hold back, Hannibal raised a hand up to gently brush away the locks of hair from Will's face. The younger man stopped and looked at him.

"What if I dared to be bold in this moment?" Hannibal spoke in a low, seductive tone.

"Would you resist me?"

Will's lips parted, unsure of what to say. "I don't know."

Hannibal went for it anyway, slowly closing the gap and locking his lips with him. Softly and gently at first, then fervent and deep. His tongue slid over Will's, exploring his mouth. And oh, he *tasted* even sweeter. Succulent. Will did nothing to protest but took it all in, his hands slowly sliding down Hannibal's chest.

Will's hair was exactly as Hannibal had imagined—silky and soft to the touch. He played with it, tempted to tug at it. Hannibal's lips felt the graze of Will's stubble, and his pulse throbbed. His body burned hot, like his soul was set on fire, and it was consuming him. For a man who was always in control, Hannibal lost his control for the briefest of moments when he gripped Will tighter, and almost devoured his mouth.

He only snapped out of it when Will broke the kiss, looking at him in disbelief, in between heavy breaths. Hannibal exhaled, eyeing his lips, imagining all the things he could make that pretty mouth do.

Maybe he should do it now.

“Get on your knees,” he said.

Will's lips slightly, *slightly* curved up before he suppressed a smile. “Excuse me, sir?”

“You heard me. It would be a bad mark as an employee to disobey your boss, would it not?”

Will gave a bit of a frown before taking a step back. He still could deny Hannibal his wish, but he didn't want to. Besides, he had a feeling if he did, Hannibal would find ways to *punish* him. His eyes were fixed on Hannibal's face as he slowly got down on his knees.

Hannibal gave a smug smile. “I figured I'd whet my appetite before leaving for the party and only you can best assist me with that. I want to see what that gorgeous little mouth of yours can do.”

Will had no clue how but Hannibal's words enticed him into making his move, almost involuntarily. He reached up to unbutton Hannibal's trousers and unzip them, running his fingers along the fabric of Hannibal's boxers, caressing and rubbing the hardened erection straining against it. He heard Hannibal sigh and knew he was doing something right. Pulling down the fabric, Will's mouth went dry when he saw the engorged veiny flesh, begging to be sucked dry.

Will ran his tongue along the shaft and Hannibal let out a soft groan, gripping the edge of the table with one hand, and threading his fingers in Will's hair with the other.

Hannibal tried to maintain restraint but when he felt the heat of Will's mouth swallow his cock whole, he grunted, tightening his grip on Will's hair.

“My dear boy,” he groaned in a low voice. “Keep going.”

Will gripped Hannibal's cock with one hand as his head bobbed, his tongue rubbing along the thick girth. Hannibal closed his eyes and swallowed, his breath leaving him. His heart felt

like it was about to explode. He thrust his hips forward, fucking Will's mouth in a steady rhythm.

"That's right," he exhaled. "You're doing well."

Will allowed his teeth to graze his cock lightly, making the other man tense up. His other hand massaged and fondled his balls. The taste of Hannibal's flesh scrambled Will's mind, arousing him as much as Hannibal enjoyed this.

Hannibal's office phone rang. He glanced down at Will who was sucking him off with such fervor and moaning in between that it made him quiver a bit.

He shushed him. "Shhh... don't make a sound, my boy. I need to take this." He pressed the speaker button on the phone. "I'm rather busy at the moment."

"Apologies, sir," the receptionist answered. "But I have Mr. Graham's tuxedo ready."

Will glanced up at him, and Hannibal gave him a look and a little tug on his hair that said, *'Don't stop.'* At that, Will sucked faster, harder, with an insatiable craving to taste him.

"Good," Hannibal replied to the woman on the other end, trying to keep his breath steady and stop himself from groaning. "I'll tell you when to bring it in."

Ending the call, he clenched Will's hair and thrust faster into his mouth with a grunt. Will took his mouth off and ran his fist along the length, stroking Hannibal's cock with urgency, as if desperate to push him off the edge.

Hannibal gripped the table tighter, breathing heavily. "I'm afraid our time is limited."

It was too much. The way Will looked up at him with hungry eyes and sucked his cock so eagerly, as if he wanted nothing more than to make him cum. It wasn't long before Hannibal felt the wave of pleasure consume him and a wave of cum shot from the tip, erupting into Will's mouth. He gripped the edge of the table hard as he came with a growl, his body shaking with each powerful spurt of his seed. His breaths were uneven as he came down from his high and looked at Will.

Will kept going as Hannibal's cum ran down his throat, swallowing every thick, creamy drop before pulling away and wiping his lips. He earned a smile of satisfaction from his boss, who caressed his cheek.

"Good boy," Hannibal exhaled.

Will rose and stared at him, his eyes glassy and lips reddened. Hannibal couldn't resist kissing him, and he did. Their lips melded together, kissing hot and hard, the taste of Hannibal's release on Will's tongue. When Hannibal pulled back, he gave him a lascivious look.

You brought a tuxedo for me," Will muttered.

"It should be obvious as to why."

“I am your secretary. I can hardly decline.”

Hannibal pressed a button on the landline and said, “Ms. Lindsey, bring in the tuxedo.”

A moment later, the door opened and Lindsey—a woman in her early thirties, with her blond hair neatly bound in a bun—entered with the tuxedo in her hand and removed the cover.

Hannibal received it and held it up. “Bespoke suit that will complement your shirt. Try it on.”

Will took the black suit off its hanger and wore it. It fit him like a glove, around his broad shoulders and his slim waist. Hannibal brushed his fingers gently along Will's hair, smoothing it and setting it in place before eyeing him head to toe.

“What a stunning creature you are.”

Will cleared his throat, trying to get his heart from overreacting but he had little to no command over it. It seemed Hannibal's influence reached far beyond his professional life, penetrating into his personal space as well, metaphorically. Will didn't fully trust him yet. Trust was a tricky area for him. But he couldn't deny the allure, the inclination to do whatever Hannibal ordered him to.

To put a name to this bizarre urge, this... feeling... was impossible because no such word existed in the English language.

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Will felt a bit overwhelmed by the rich crowd at the event, and nobody noticed it but Hannibal. The pompous affluent individuals with their designer clothing and gaudy jewelry only served as reminders as to why Will enjoyed the solitude. He was and always would be a lone wolf. He didn't mix well with the materialistic world of the rich and powerful.

Hannibal was... different. Technically, he was rich too and he did dress like one, but his intellect was refreshing, his perception unique. Which was why, despite the annoying party, Will chose to stick by his side.

Simply put, Hannibal *understood* him. And that was proof when the older man kept passing side glances at Will while speaking to the investors, as though asking, ‘Are you alright?’

The more Will's discomfort heightened, the less subtle it became.

Hannibal smiled at the investors. “I take it you are interested in investing in my enterprise then. There's no need for second thoughts when your gut tells you it's the right thing to do.”

One of the investors nodded. “And the gut is never wrong, is it, Mr. Lecter?”

“What is wrong is when we as humans undermine it and misconstrue it as overthinking.”

“Quite true.”

“Let’s not waste anymore time. Let’s enjoy the party.”

Making sure the investors are happy, Hannibal excused himself and made his way to Will, who had just finished his second glass of wine.

“Let me try and get your mind off things.” Hannibal let a hand out. “Will you give me the privilege of dancing with you?”

Will raised a brow. “I’m not sure dancing is in my repertoire.”

“That won’t be an issue. I’ll take the lead. I promise you it won’t be awkward and it surely won’t be complicated. In fact, considering all that is happening in your life, I’m certain beyond doubt that dancing is the least complicated thing.”

The man had a way with words. It was like he had created the most beautiful trap and Will willingly walked into it.

Will took his hand and Hannibal led him to the dance floor, then drew him close to his body until their faces were mere inches apart. Hannibal held one of Will’s hands while his other arm was bound around Will’s waist. Will did the same, and followed Hannibal’s lead to the slow rhythm of some classical music playing from the speakers. He moved with him, worried he might step on his foot by accident, but he was surprised at how naturally it came to him.

Hannibal purred words of appreciation in between: ‘*You’re doing great*’, ‘*You’re a natural*’, spurring him on. He dipped Will, and when he pulled him up slowly, their faces touched. Noses brushed and breaths mingled. Hannibal closed his eyes as Will’s cheek touched his, and he inhaled his heady scent.

“What have you done to me?” he purred in Will’s ear, sending vibrations down his chest.

Nudging Will back, Hannibal twirled him around before bringing him close again, pressing his back against his chest. He held Will’s hand and brought his palm to the side of his head, while gliding his lips along the younger man’s cheek and pressing a kiss.

“It’s getting increasingly harder to resist you,” he whispered, nuzzling his nose in Will’s hair and inhaling deeply again.

Will’s breath caught in his throat, and his heart jackhammered in his chest. The party, the rich people, the banquet hall, all blurred and faded into the background. Something ignited in his core, something white-hot, flooding through his body, all the way down to his groin. The heat was akin to the flames of a Phoenix rising from the ashes. It felt like he’d been dead all this time, an empty shell of a man, and he just came alive at this very moment. Hannibal’s allure was undeniable. His touch was titillating, maddening, and it stole Will’s ability to think straight. If Hannibal were to commit a crime now, Will wouldn’t see it coming.

*Most of all, he wanted him.*

He knew this was going too fast. He was well aware of it, and he hadn't the slightest clue as to why he couldn't back away. A voice deep down warned him of moving too rashly, but Will couldn't hear it. Maybe he chose not to.

Hannibal spun him around and sharply tugged him close to his chest again, making him gasp softly. Bringing their faces together again.

A voice blatantly interrupted the intimacy. "Will?"

Will snapped out of the hypnotic trance and glanced at Beverly Katz, standing there with one eyebrow raised. It was a pleasant surprise seeing her dressed in a black evening gown rather than her usual formal outfit. She looked radiant.

"Bev..." he cleared his throat, quickly moving away from Hannibal. "You're the last person I'd expect in a place like this."

Hannibal looked slightly annoyed by Beverly's presence, but it quickly disappeared and he smiled. "Are you a friend of Will's?"

"Yes, actually. Agent Beverly Katz." She extended her hand. "You must be Will's new boss."

"I wouldn't exactly say that. I much rather consider Will a colleague, a team-player, if you must, rather than a subordinate."

"What are you doing here, Bev?" Will asked. "It's rather random."

"I was invited by Alana." Beverly gestured to Alana. "Or rather, our forensic team was invited. I think Price and Zeller are probably stuffing their faces or examining the food at the buffet. As long as I'm here, I might as well dance."

Will nodded. "I'm a little rusty. But I'll try."

Alana walked to Hannibal, in her red dress, asking him to dance. He politely indulged her. But as Hannibal and Will danced with the women, they couldn't keep their eyes off each other. For the first time, Hannibal's eyes were expressive, like he wasn't hiding anything, at least at that moment, and he stared at Will like he was a celestial being.

Will stole furtive glances back at him, unable to shake the feeling of Hannibal's lips on his cheek and the heat of his body from a moment ago.

His mind struggled to believe just what the *fuck* that was...

# A Delicate Thread

## Chapter Notes

Didn't get time to edit the chapter. Sorry guys. Hope you enjoy it anyway <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)



Whatever happened last evening remained fresh in Will's mind, but he'd much rather chalk it up to impulse actions. He knew better than to jump into something without thinking. He had no idea why he lost his sense of reasoning last evening, but he didn't want to make that mistake again. And he wanted to make that crystal clear to Hannibal too.

Hannibal leaned over a 3D model of the latest residential complex—the smart building he planned on constructing—created from the blueprints. He peered at every meticulous detail of the 3D model, the tiniest design, layout and angle, ensuring it matched his expectations. It tended to irk him if anything was amiss in the slightest. The board of directors extended their support in the construction of the complex, which Will found surprising. Up until yesterday, they were against sustainability and obsessed over profits.

Looked like Hannibal's charm won them over.

“Let the team know that the project has been greenlit,” Hannibal said, leaning his weight on his fingers on the table. “We can move forward with the developments.”

Will's mind still strayed back to last evening and it intended to poke and prod at him until he got it out. “It's too fast.”

Hannibal raised his brows. “I can assure you, it's the right time. This complex had been in our plans for the past six months—”

“I meant last night.”

Hannibal stood upright, making sense of what Will was talking about. He had an idea but he wanted Will to elaborate. “I don't follow.”

“Trust has always been a delicate thread to me. I don't know anything about you and I find it inappropriate to move too fast. Too rashly. I worry I might end up somewhere I'll regret.”

A brief tinge of disappointment flickers upon Hannibal's face before vanishing just as quickly and he lowers his gaze to the 3D building model. “It's true that I'm... fascinated by you, Will. It's difficult to avoid. My apologies if I was too rash. I should've exercised restraint and been more considerate of your personal space. Although... it's as I said, you are difficult to avoid.”

So was Hannibal. There was a tiny part of Will in the darkest recesses of his soul that couldn't avoid Hannibal either, but he knew better than to let impulse take the wheel. He kept his rational mind in check. It didn't mean he couldn't admire Hannibal, though. The man lacked fear, always having a sense of equanimity and possessing a great savoir-faire. Of course, the ideal CEO must have all of these things, but Hannibal proved to be the epitome of them.

Even if Will wanted to keep his distance, he couldn't deny the appeal.

Two men entered the office, one taller and broader than the other, and both giving Hannibal a firm nod.

“Mr. Lecter,” one of them, a blond-haired man said, approaching the desk.

“Ah.” Hannibal went around the desk to greet them and shake their hands, before turning to Will. “Will, may I introduce you to our latest board of directors, Mr. Hartford and Mr. Gomez. They will be replacing Burnham and Gordon.”

The seconds ticked in Will’s mind, like he was trying to fit puzzle pieces together but none of the pieces fit.

He gave the new directors a firm handshake. “Nice to meet you. Forgive me, it’s rather unexpected. I wasn’t aware that Burnham and Gordon left.” He looked at Hannibal, as if searching for answers.

Hannibal remained nonchalant. “Unfortunately, as much as I hate to admit, I had a disagreement with them and they chose to leave. Nothing I said changed their minds.”

He spoke with zero reluctance and with such resolve that it was convincing to anyone. Even Will. Will made a conscious choice to not prod further, although he wasn’t going to drop the subject entirely. As he walked alongside Hannibal and the directors out of the office, the pen he balanced with the papers in his hands slipped out of his grasp. Hannibal immediately caught it mid-air with ease and handed it to him. When Will received it, their fingers brushed, as though Hannibal deliberately intended it, and though the contact was brief, it felt like a fragile thread connecting them both together. For that moment, Will’s resistance briefly wavered, and his fingers twitched ever so slightly. He wanted to grab onto Hannibal’s hand and hold it. And maybe, just maybe... Hannibal wanted it too.

Will pulled his hand away, returning to his indifferent state like it took no effort at all. He brushed those sensations aside completely before they overpowered him.

But even as the meeting proceeded, Hannibal passed furtive glances at Will occasionally, as if speaking a secret language only Will could understand. Will had to consciously avoid the man’s gaze and try to keep it impersonal. He was here to work and that was where he drew the line.

It was easier said than done though. He found himself surreptitiously looking at Hannibal as well, noticing the way he talks, the way his lips moved, the tone of his voice, the language of his eyes, all hiding something behind them. All other voices drowned into the background and only Will and Hannibal existed.

Will wasn’t blind to it. He was aware of the steadily rising tension between him and Hannibal and it frustrated him silently.

Once the meeting was over, he wanted to get the hell out of the conference room. He closed his laptop and picked it up, heading to the door.

“Will.” Hannibal’s voice was like a snare, holding him in place. “I understand you refrain from communicating more than necessary with me because you want to keep things impersonal. I also understand that everything that happened yesterday is the cause of it. But since we’re working together, nothing can be achieved without proper communication. Let me break the ice by inviting you to dinner. It will be entirely casual, I promise you. Think of it as two colleagues catching up. Maybe we can get to know each other better.”

Dinner was always a way to close the gap. It would never remain impersonal if Will accepted the invitation. He was better off declining the offer.

“Alright,” he replied.

*So much for that.*

Hannibal’s face lit up. He opened his notepad and jotted down his address on a page before neatly tearing it off and handing it to Will. “I will see you at eight PM.”

“I’ll be there.” Will received the paper and folded it, slipping it into his pocket.

After work, Will took some time to visit the BSHCI. He had to request Beverly and then Chilton to let him meet the Chesapeake Ripper, a.k.a Abel Gideon. Both Beverly and Chilton had some doubts, but then reluctantly agreed to let him meet the prisoner. He got only fifteen minutes with Abel. He felt it was enough time.

He walked through the hallways of the BSHCI, the visitor badge hanging from his blue shirt pocket, until he came upon Gideon’s cell. Gideon’s mouth twisted into a crooked smile.

“And the prodigal son returns,” he said.

“I wasn’t gone long,” Will replied.

“Please. Staying away from the FBI didn’t do you any favors. Did it? Here you come running back to the only place that gives you purpose.”

Will gave a slight smirk before slipping his hands into his brown corduroy pants and pacing slowly outside the cell. “You do have an artistic flair to your killings. And the ritual consumption of the organs.”

“Why waste what can be eaten?” Gideon stood and faced Will.

“I do admire your surgical finesse.”

Gideon bowed his head. “I’m honored.”

Will studied him, his face, his eyes, the micro-expressions. Nothing about him spelled fear. Gideon was cold, nonchalant, and behaved like the Ripper would.

“I studied the victims you’ve murdered. They seem random but I know they’re not. They don’t appear to have any criminal records, but they are also people who aren’t ethical... Or should I say... well-mannered? Is that how you choose your victims?”

“You’re right.” Gideon grinned. “I don’t like people who misbehave. Even if they don’t have criminal records, it doesn’t mean they’re innocent. Nobody’s innocent. I just happen to go for the ones who are... well... rude. I’m doing the world a favor.”

“I highly doubt that. I just think you enjoy the thrill. I also think you’re simply a pitiful man who’s living a solitary life. Trying to prove a point. I think the Ripper’s a coward.”

Will let that sink in, observing Gideon’s reaction. Gideon laughed, unfazed by the insult.

“Think whatever you want, Mr. Graham. You are right, though. I enjoyed the thrill.”

Will gave him a last look before leaving the BSHCI.

As he moved away from the cell, Gideon spoke, “You know, the FBI’s not the same without you. You make things interesting. Otherwise, it’s just a bunch of wannabes. You still think you can stay away from this life for very long?”

Will didn’t turn to him, but let his words get to his head. Gideon was right. Will felt out of place almost everywhere except when he was solving cases. Maybe he was so engrossed in that life that nothing else felt quite right. On that note, Hannibal was right too—being a secretary was odd for him.

As he exited the BSHCI, his gaze fell upon a redhead and he immediately huffed in annoyance. “You’re not getting any exclusives from me, Freddie.”

Freddie was dressed in a figure-hugging black dress, a trench coat and gloves, holding her handbag.

“You think that’s what I’m here for?” she smirked. “You break my heart. I just wanted to make sure you thought the same.”

“Thought what?”

“That Gideon is not the Chesapeake Ripper.”

“Whatever makes you say that?”

“I don’t know. Intuition, I guess. I wanted to know what you think.”

“You’re wasting your time.” Will brushed past her.

“You might try to escape this life, but it won’t let you escape.”

Will scoffed. “You and Gideon have the same fucking script or something?”

He hated being reminded of his choices. It seemed nobody wanted to believe him. Then again, why would they? It was rather unconventional for an FBI agent to leave his job and go for something mundane. Especially a job that didn’t suit Will’s personality at all.

Will brushed those thoughts aside and focused on Gideon. It might look like he hadn't gained anything useful from him, but that ten-minute conversation was enough to bring about a lot of theories in his head. That was all he needed. It was time to put those theories to the test.

"There were more Ripper-style murders even after Gideon's arrest," Freddie added, with a look of confidence, as if she knew it would pique Will's interest.

Even if it did, Will didn't show it. He simply walked away.

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Will couldn't remember the last time he suited up for any occasion. *Oh yeah, that's right, he had never been in one.* The last time he had suited up was for that party with Hannibal recently, and only because Hannibal insisted he wore that tuxedo.

So now, Will stood in front of Hannibal's grand house, straightening his black suit, exhaling slowly. In his hand was a bottle of wine which, according to the store he bought it from, was the best there was. Whether it was the kind of "best" that suited Hannibal's preferences was yet to be known. Will wasn't a connoisseur. He just picked whatever was nice.

Besides, the bottle looked fancy.

He knocked on the door and waited, releasing another breath, like he was trying to convince himself to remain detached. This was just a professional dinner. It was supposed to remain that way.

The door opened and Hannibal greeted him, dressed fastidiously in a navy blue three-piece suit, and a dark shirt. Will registered the way Hannibal's lips parted at the sight of him, the same way Will did at the sight of Hannibal. At the very least, both men mutually considered the other as no less than stunning.

"Please come in, Will," Hannibal said.

Will handed him the bottle of wine and Hannibal graciously accepted it before closing the door behind him and leading him to the dinner table.

"I'll be right back." Hannibal headed into the kitchen, and came back with the food. "Foie gras with rhubarb and duck breast for starters, stir-fry black pepper beef for the main course, and buttermilk panna cotta with lychee, raspberry, and rose for dessert."

"Looks delicious," Will replied.

And it was true. The colors and the presentation of the food were exquisite, to say the least. Will took a bite of the duck breast and savored the rich flavors.

"Tastes delicious too."

Hannibal bowed his head as he took a seat. "I'm glad it is to your liking. Let's not think of one another as CEO and secretary. Here, in my house, we are friends."

Will raised a brow. "Too early, don't you think?"

"I thought we had established a good rapport and reached the point of friendship."

Will looked at the food. Part of his mind was occupied with Abel Gideon. He watched Hannibal take a bite of the duck breast with grace, and wondered if bringing up the Ripper during dinner was a good idea. But Hannibal used to be a psychiatrist, with a particular expertise and fascination for the criminally insane, so there was no better person to talk to regarding this subject.

"I admit I've been rather occupied lately," he said.

"Yes, I've sensed it," Hannibal replied. "This is a safe space, Will. What seems to be bothering you?"

"The Chesapeake Ripper."

Hannibal tilted his head, slightly curious.

"Abel Gideon," Will added. "He displayed all the qualities of the Ripper, and his MO matches. I don't doubt he's the one."

Hannibal's chewing slowed. "I see."

"I got a chance to speak to him today."

"I thought you had left the FBI."

"It was unofficial. Just wanted to see him for myself. After all, the FBI's been after the Ripper for years."

"Are you certain he's the Ripper? I saw in the news that there were more murders that matched the Ripper's signature style."

"I'm convinced Gideon is the Ripper. Whoever is still carrying out the murders is a copycat. Just a cheap imitation."

Hannibal glanced at the food. There was a slight twitch of his lips, almost unnoticeable, and the way his face hardened subtly. His smile faded for a moment as he cut a piece of the meat. The silence was thick, unnerving. Hannibal slowly forked the morsel into his mouth, slowly, with a hint of coldness in his eyes as he looked up at Will.

"How can you be sure of that?" he asked, maintaining the politeness.

Will sipped wine from his glass. "Gideon didn't hesitate. Every piece of evidence pointed to him. There's no doubt."

Hannibal licked his lips slowly. “You may want to check again. Perhaps you missed something.”

“I’m not a part of the FBI anymore. It’s none of my business.”

Hannibal’s face shifted, like flipping a switch, and he smiled. “No, of course not.”

Post dinner, Will carried the plates to the kitchen, assisting him with washing them. He took in the sight of the veins on Hannibal’s forearms and hands as the latter placed the dishes in the dishwasher before washing his hands. There was something captivating about the veins in his hands, the long fingers. Will took note of all the deliberate brushes of their fingers, the way their hands lightly skimmed over each other whenever Will handed Hannibal something. If that was Hannibal’s way of distracting him, it was fucking working. But the biggest mystery was why Will was allowing himself to be distracted in the first place.

“We all have an innate desire to purge the world of all evil,” Hannibal said, as he dried his hands with a hand towel. “What does it matter who does it?”

Will caught the peek of Hannibal’s chest from the unbuttoned top part of his shirt, the coating of chest hair before looking away. “You think the Ripper’s actions are justified?”

“If you had a chance to eliminate those who cause others harm, wouldn’t you take it?”

“I suppose... but then again, it’s not my place to decide who lives and who dies.”

“Nonsense, Will. You had killed criminals during your job when you needed to, when your gut told you, and you enjoyed it. You don’t think the Ripper does a better job of purging the rude than the police or the FBI?”

Will paused. “If we allow one killer to continue doing what he wanted, just because he’s some kind of twisted vigilante, it would give birth to more Rippers. I’m not sure that’s a good thing.”

“You have urges too. Urges you suppress behind a badge. You might not be a part of the FBI anymore but you still seem to be hiding behind a mask. The world fears you because it knows what you’re capable of if you decide to break out of the chrysalis and spread your wings.”

Will fell silent. He had always felt he was hiding his true self so Hannibal wasn’t wrong on that part. He was drawn to Hannibal in ways he couldn’t explain. Hannibal clearly wasn’t that subtle in dropping hints. It was the tiny micro-expressions, the gestures, and the words. Will noticed them all, most likely in a way nobody else could.

But Hannibal’s charms were something no one could resist. Will found himself looking a few seconds longer than necessary at the finer details—the way Hannibal’s soft bangs fell down his forehead, the intense amber of his eyes, the way he moves. As much as Will cursed himself for it, he couldn’t help registering the shape of Hannibal’s body through his crisp dress shirt. He could only attempt to hold the strange sensations in his gut in check and maintain some semblance of dignity. He was only human, after all. And it was both strange and fascinating how their temperament and perspectives were vastly different, yet the two of

them clicked instantly and understood one another. The undeniable attraction they shared was an undercurrent beneath their conversations, constantly playing and hinting at something.

Still, Will always put a pause to those sensations and feelings because he couldn't let them cloud his judgment. And right now, judgment was crucial.

He excused himself from the kitchen and went out of the house to make a phone call. Beverly's familiar voice was always welcome to his ears.

"Please tell me you're calling because you miss me so dearly and you want to come back," she said.

Will smiled. "I do miss you, but... I don't think I can come back just yet."

"What is it then?"

Will glanced back at the house, making sure Hannibal wasn't eavesdropping or anything. "It's about Gideon."

"The Ripper?"

"Yeah, I needed to speak with him because I needed to confirm my theory."

"Which is?"

Will paused. "Abel Gideon is not the Chesapeake Ripper."

There was an even longer pause on the other end. Beverly could reject his theory, even tell him he was crazy, but she knew better. Will never said anything without a reason.

"I seriously need an explanation, Will," she replied afterwards. "Do you have any idea of the consequences?"

"I do. And you will get an explanation."

A voice sounded behind him. "Will?"

Will turned around, seeing Hannibal there, the moonlight casting a glow on his skin and an eerie glint in his eyes. The rest of his face was hidden by the shadows in an unsettling way. He had appeared so silently, like an apparition, that it caught Will completely off guard.

"Won't you join me for a glass of wine?" Hannibal asked.

Will ended the call and slid the phone in his pocket, showing nothing on his face, but making a mental note to catch up with Beverly. "Why not?"

He followed Hannibal back into the house, to the living room, where Hannibal picked up a bottle of wine and two glasses. Handing one to Will, he pours wine into both glasses.

"All things considered, I am glad to have you as my secretary," said Hannibal.

Will simply smiled. As both men took a sip of the wine, their eyes remained locked, speaking that secret language. The air was thick between them, and it was clear that something...

*Something* lurked beneath the surface.

## Chapter End Notes

Hope you liked the chapter. If you enjoy my work, consider checking out my novel, 'Trickster', if you like crime-thrillers :) Of course, I can't post links here, but you'll find my book if you search for "Trickster Aidan Hunter series" on Amazon.

# Reading Between The Lines

## Chapter Notes

Hello, I'm so sorry for the late update. Between my job, completing art commissions, and a brief period where I was sick, I couldn't write much. Thank you for sticking with me so far, and I hope you'll stick with me for the rest of this ride. :)

If you love my writing, support me on socials. You can find my fanart, Hannibal comics and more <3 <3 -

twitter - winter\_queen8

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Alana sat cross-legged in her office, dealing with a bunch of employee leaves, conflicts, and payrolls. Despite the neatly piled yet ever-growing stack of papers on her desk, she dealt with it all equably. What had once been a job that drove her up the wall was now like a breeze. She always was elegant, and dealt with conflicts among employees with tact. It was natural that she was a favorite amongst everyone in the company, men and women alike.

She did notice how the men often ogled at her, flirted with her (part of that flirting was to convince her to do something for them) but thanks to her impenetrable wall, none of that nonsense worked.

Which is why she had a special affinity for Will Graham. She liked him better than the rest. The one real person amidst a sea of sycophants. So, her face naturally shone whenever Will entered the room and her smile came on by instinct.

“How’s your first week?” she asked.

“Not sure if I should inveigh against it since I’m the one who chose this job,” Will replied.

“Oh, you’re welcome to complain. Sometimes things don’t pan out the way we want them to. Is Hannibal treating you well?”

*The man made me give him a blowjob on the first day.* “Yeah, he is.” Will slipped his hands into his pockets and idly wandered about the room, staring at the books and folders on the shelves.

Alana’s bright blue eyes followed him, reading him. “Okay, what is it?”

Will glanced at her. “Excuse me?”

She sighed and crossed her legs, leaning back in her chair. “When Hannibal used to practice psychiatry, he had a colleague he was fond of. Me. You seriously think you’d get past my psychiatric mind that easily?”

Will half-grinned. “No, I guess not. You were always the one who read between the lines.”

“I’m going to take a guess... You miss the FBI.”

Will bobbed his eyebrows. “That obvious, huh?”

“Is this about the Ripper case? I thought it was closed.”

“Not to me.”

Alana looked at the papers on her desk, dropping her pen. “Of course not.”

Will sensed the shift in her demeanor. “What?”

“Nothing.” She sighed. “Just that... I can’t ever seem to get you away from things that do you harm.”

As far as Will knew her, there was always something hidden behind her words and not everyone could decipher them. But he could always comprehend everything she said. And his safety or wellbeing wasn’t the only thing she was concerned about. She also happened to be one of the many people who believed Will was on a wild goose chase, and that he was wasting his time pursuing the Ripper case.

This ticked him off and he scoffed. “Wow. You don’t think I’m right.”

“This isn’t about right or wrong, Will,” Alana replied, straight from the shoulder. “Even when you were still a part of the BAU, you were *obsessed* with the Ripper. And you’re still obsessed, even when he’s none of your business.”

“I know Abel’s not the Ripper.”

She exhaled a gust of air. “Fine. Do you have any evidence that can convince Jack?”

“I’m working on it.”

“Sure.”

Will shook his head. “I know you think I’m grasping at straws. But I know what my gut tells me. And it’s never wrong.”

He stormed out of the office, walking a few steps in the general direction of Hannibal’s office before stopping and rubbing his face, sighing loudly. He needed to keep his wits about him if he needed to see this through. There was no point in arguing or trying to justify himself, because technically, Alana was right. He needed evidence. Even Beverly needed a plausible explanation.

“Will?”

Will’s train of thought was abruptly interrupted and the noise in his head was silenced by Hannibal’s appearance. Will turned to face the man, catching those amber eyes looking at him with unmistakable concern.

“You have been distracted lately,” Hannibal said, then observed Will’s face. “When was the last time you slept?”

Will closed his eyes, feeling the weight of sleep on his head. It was like an appointment long overdue. “I don’t remember.”

Hannibal raised his hand to touch his face, but paused midway, waiting to see if he would stop him. But when Will uttered no words of protest, Hannibal held his cheek, lightly rubbing his cheekbone with his thumb. Will exhaled the softest of breaths, unable to resist the warm allure of Hannibal’s touch. Resistance was futile, apparently.

“Come with me,” Hannibal said, and led him to the elevator.

The silver doors opened with a ding and the two of them entered. As Hannibal pressed a button to the ground floor, Will eyed the tenth floor button. The place where Hannibal had a private meeting with Burnham and Gordon before they supposedly resigned. Will heard the slow exhale of his breath, and for some reason, felt a lot more intimate simply standing next to him in a confined space such as this.

But having a quiet space with no one but him and Hannibal compelled Will to talk to him, to maybe have a therapy session or something, even though Hannibal wasn’t actively practicing psychiatry anymore. Will never allowed anyone into his personal space, nor did he want to share anything that went on in the labyrinth that was his mind, but he seemed to have given the keys to Hannibal, allowing him a passage through the walls Will built up in his mind. The trust seemed to have grown so soon, it wasn’t necessarily a good sign but Will couldn’t help himself.

“Is it the case?” Hannibal asked, breaking the silence.

“I seem to be the only one at the BAU with differing opinions,” Will replied. “And no solid evidence. But I know I’m right.”

The doors open to the brightly illuminated lobby, the sunlight abundantly pouring through the floor-to-ceiling windows and making the chandelier shimmer and shine like diamonds. Hannibal led Will to the pantry, next to which was the kitchen. Being a culinary virtuoso, it was only natural he would want all the food in the building to be cooked to perfection. The pantry surprisingly had an instant coffee vending machine, but Hannibal kept it for the employees who didn’t have time to prepare a good cup of coffee.

He instead went to the other manual coffee maker, working it as he spoke to Will. “How do your opinions differ?”

Will sighed. “I don’t think Gideon’s the Ripper.”

Hannibal stopped midway of making coffee and raised a brow at him, a smile stretching his lips. “And whatever made you change your mind about him?”

Will could tell the truth, but he chose not to. “Instinct.”

“Instincts are always right. You should trust yours.” Hannibal handed him a cup of fresh black coffee, and made one for himself. “But now the challenge lies in backing up your theory with evidence.”

“I’m working on it.” Will sipped his coffee. “Seems like no matter where I go, no matter how far I wander from the things that haunt me, no matter what kind of pedestrian job I try to hide behind, I’ll always be crazy. Maybe Jack was right about me.”

“Will.” Hannibal immediately stopped him, bringing a hand to gently hold his face. “You are anything but crazy.” He was so close, Will could feel his breath fanning over his mouth. “But if I may be forthright, and if this is of any comfort to you, then I too am crazy.”

“You sure do a great job of hiding it.”

“I try to.”

Hannibal languidly brushed Will’s cheeks with his thumb in a way that soothed him, and the younger man couldn’t help but exhale and nuzzle his cheek in Hannibal’s palm. For that moment, the affinity in Hannibal’s eyes was unmistakable. Both of them seemed vulnerable, if only for each other. Will dropped his gaze to Hannibal’s lips, and it seemed as if the distance between them was closing inch by inch. Or perhaps he was imagining it. Either way, he snapped himself out of it and inched away, a part of him regretting it. The brief flash of disappointment on Hannibal’s face was easily unnoticed and quickly suppressed and he looked away, retracting his hand and sipping his coffee. He was adept at hiding his emotions.

He glanced at his glistening Rolex and checked the time. “We have a meeting to attend with the architect. It would be a pleasure to see this project through to fruition with you by my side.”

Will nodded. “When do we leave?”

“Now.”

Hannibal placed the mugs of coffee on the counter for the assistants to pick up before leading Will out of the pantry, to the gleaming black Bentley waiting outside. A spruce chauffeur with white gloves opened the door for both of them, giving Hannibal a deferential nod of his head.

As the car drove, Hannibal spoke on the phone with someone, most likely the architect. His demeanor switched rather instantly, back to the stoic and prepotent CEO. Any trace of the warmth he had expressed towards Will had vanished completely.

“Yes,” he answered the architect over the phone. “I do have the floor plans with me.” He gave Will a side-glance and snapped his finger, letting his hand out as an order.

Will took the tablet and accessed the floor plans on it before handing it to Hannibal, who received it and didn’t even look back at him. The conversation went on for another ten minutes before Hannibal cut the call. But before he could say anything to Will, he received another call.

“Mr. Hartford, I am currently on my way—” Something cut his speech off and his face suddenly darkened. “When?”

Will sent a questioning glance to the phone, but Hannibal didn’t pay attention.

“Is the intruder still in the premises?” Hannibal asked, his tone deeper and threatening. “Lock down the building. It is imperative we do not let him escape.” He then eyed the driver. “We are going back. Turn around immediately.”

After he cut the call, Will’s concern came through as he searched the older man’s face for an explanation. This was the first time he saw the man so pissed that he contemplated on whether to ask him about what was going on. Fortunately, Hannibal answered his doubts on his own.

“Someone broke into the surveillance room and stole some of our security footage,” Hannibal replied. “The secrets of this company are of top priority. We cannot let our inner workings get into the hands of our rivals or anyone with the agenda of destroying what I built.”

“He won’t get away.” Will’s FBI instincts kicked in.

Hannibal glanced at him before looking at the driver again. “Hand me the case from the glove compartment.” The driver unlocked the compartment and handed him a small black case, which Hannibal handed over to Will. “This may serve your purposes. I keep it for emergencies.”

Will opened the case to find a Glock neatly encased in it, along with a magazine. Of course Hannibal would have a licensed gun, though he didn’t look like the type to use them. But it made sense considering his influence and his reputation. There were always threats lurking

around the corner. Will took the gun out and loaded the magazine into it, pulling back the slide and releasing it.

Once the car reached the building, Will stuck close by Hannibal as the two of them hurried into the building, along with Hartford, Gomez, and a bunch of security guards telling Hannibal they had the intruder cornered in the stairwell. Or at least, they fully believe they had. The doors of the stairwell burst open while the group were crossing the lobby, and all eyes fell on a man posing as one of the maintenance crew with a bag and a gun in his hand.

Hannibal recognized the man to be one of the employees working in his company. One of the chief engineers. “Arthur? I’m sure there has to be a justifiable explanation.”

Out of fear, Arthur raised his gun at Hannibal, who was an open target.

But Will was faster. He didn’t hesitate. His Glock snapped up as he fired a shot at Arthur’s arm. Arthur grunted in pain, his gun instinctively going off, missing his initial target at Hannibal’s chest and instead hitting him in the arm. Hannibal’s arm jerked back from the velocity and he stumbled backwards, falling to the ground. The guards rushed to subdue Arthur, while Will rushed to Hannibal’s aid. He immediately clamped a hand to the other man’s arm to staunch the bleeding, placing a hand under his head to cradle it. Scarlet stains spread across the fabric of Hannibal’s beige plaid suit.

“Call 911!” Will bellowed to the guards, then looked at Hannibal with lips parted in worry. “You’ll be okay. It doesn’t look too bad.”

Hannibal grunted softly, but his focus was more on Will’s concern than the wound on his arm. A slight smile came upon his face. “You are not very proficient in the art of lying.”

Will managed a half-smile. “I’m good enough. You’re lucky it’s superficial.”

“Then I’d rather not go to the hospital. I much prefer the medical team treating me within the confines of my office.”

“That is not a good idea.”

“You said it yourself. It is superficial. Therefore I insist.”

“Jesus fucking Christ, is this a good time to be stub—” Will paused when he saw Hannibal raising a brow authoritatively, and sighed. “Of course, *sir*. ”

With the help of one of the security guards, Will took Hannibal up to his penthouse office. The paramedics arrived shortly after, making their way up too. As the medics tended to Hannibal’s wound, the man barely flinched from the pain. He simply closed his eyes as if relishing the feeling. But Will didn’t quite share the same sensation. He placed the Glock on Hannibal’s desk and watched the medic removing the bullet from Hannibal’s arm with a tweezer and dropping it into a small metal dish, then cleaning and suturing the wound.

Hannibal's shirt was hung over his chair. If only Will could keep his focus on the wound and not on the man's broad shoulders and firm pecs, that would be swell. But who can blame him? It was the first time he saw Hannibal without his shirt.

"I would prefer it if you made me head of security," Will said.

Hannibal glanced up at him from the couch. "What prompted this sudden decision, if I may ask?"

"Your safety and wellbeing, along with the fact I have an FBI background. I would serve a lot better than half the security staff you have here, sir. No offense."

Will had a fair point and he relied on Hannibal's trust in him.

Hannibal considered his request and gave a nod. "Very well. From here on out, you may take charge of security."

"And I suppose you'll be taking the rest of the day off?"

"Not a chance. Just received word that some of our investors backed off from what we agreed upon and I need to convince them to make the right choice."

Will scoffed. "Really? You almost got killed and that's the first thing you think about?"

"It wouldn't be the first time I was in harm's way, and it certainly wouldn't be the last. It does not mean I should stop what I'm doing out of fear."

"It's not fear—"

"My decision is final."

Will's tone turns stern involuntarily. "Hannibal—"

Hannibal's face immediately hardens at the direct mention of his name, and his eyes darken.

"I would much appreciate it if you remained within your limits, Mr. Graham."

It was always the 'Mr. Graham' that came out during times of anger, and a sign that despite Will's disapproval of Hannibal's decisions, he should back down.

"Yes, sir," he replied in a low tone. Turning around, he left the office without looking back at his boss.

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The clock struck half past six that evening as Will waited in Hannibal's office, reading one of the books from his bookshelf— *The Alchemist* . Hannibal was in another one of his private

meetings on the tenth floor, to which Will wasn't allowed as usual. Will put the book down when he received a call from Beverly, asking him about the Ripper.

Will pinched his eyes, trying to keep himself awake as the fatigue of the day slowly started to set in. "I'm working on it."

"Work faster," Beverly replied. "I haven't told Jack about your theory. I didn't want him to blow a gasket. But ever since you told me Gideon wasn't the Ripper, I haven't been able to sleep."

"I know. I need time, Bev. Keep an eye on the latest murders for me."

"Jack's gonna call you in."

"I expect him to."

Will ended the call moments before Hannibal arrived in the office. The man seemed... off. Forbidding. He now wore a dark plaid suit since his beige suit was practically ruined by a bullet. Will rose from the couch.

"What happened with the investors?" he said.

"They seemed to have changed their minds," Hannibal replied, curtly. "We may have to find other investors."

"I see. Sorry that happened."

"It doesn't matter." Hannibal came closer to Will, reaching up to trace his lips with his thumb. "I need a distraction. Or rather... I need a release."

Will's pulse immediately picked up pace and he cleared his throat. "I thought we agreed on keeping it impersonal."

"You will not deny me this, Will Graham." Hannibal's eyes glinted with a ferocity that surprised the younger man, as if to put him in his place. "You will not disobey."

Before Will could react, Hannibal's lips enveloped his, devouring it, his tongue thrusting into the warm space of Will's mouth and rubbing against his tongue. Will gasped softly as the other man coiled his arm around him, and pressed his body close to his.

"Sir—"

"Shh..."

The tension grew so quickly that Will couldn't back off. The air was hot and thick and his mind blanked out. Nothing mattered anymore. Not the case, or the Ripper, or Abel Gideon. His emotions were all over the place but his desires were absolute. He grabbed Hannibal's lapels, pulling him closer, as if he wasn't close enough already, and returned the kiss with twice the vehemence.

Hannibal ripped Will's shirt open without caring about what the man would wear after the deed was done. The buttons popped off, falling to the floor, and Hannibal's mouth hungrily sucked and kissed and licked Will's skin, starting from his neck to his collarbone to his chest. Will exhaled and moaned softly, grabbing Hannibal's hair in his fist, feeling his teeth biting his nipple.

"I want you," Hannibal's words came in an obsessed whisper. "I want you now, Will. I do not care about the consequences."

Will couldn't deny him his needs, anyway. He was already in too deep to crawl back out. His body was on fire and his nerves were sparking off like crazy. Every touch of Hannibal's was electric, causing goosebumps wherever his hands roamed. The man knew what he was doing. It didn't take a second for Will to realize that he was falling, *falling* quicker than he expected. Falling into Hannibal's embrace. Melting into his arms.

He couldn't fight him, because as much as he would like to keep things "impersonal", he failed to keep his distance from Hannibal. All it took was a searing kiss and an electrifying touch to bring his truth out.

*That he craved him just as much.*

# The Impeccable Quality of Being Right

## Chapter Notes

- I'm so sorry for the late update. Things have been really rough for me lately :( Thank you for your patience 

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)



Hannibal brought his large hand to grip the nape of Will's neck as he licked and bit his throat, moving from one side to the other. Will gasped, his Adam's apple bobbing, his breath shallow, grasping onto Hannibal's suit, as if wanting to tear it off with his bare hands. The clothes soon become a hindrance to Hannibal as he whipped off his suit, waistcoat, tie, and

shirt, assisted by Will, who also couldn't wait to get them off. Hannibal pulled their bodies together, hard, pressing their hips together for some semblance of relief. He had been waiting so long for this, and could hardly restrain himself anymore.

Will's shirt came off next, and their naked torsos press against each other, nipples brushing against the other's skin, and muscles flexing with every movement. Hannibal almost devoured Will from the way his mouth was all over him, kissing, biting, and sucking every inch of skin he can find, while Will held onto him tightly, trying to get his own mouth on the older man, breathing heavily. Hannibal stopped for a moment and stared darkly into Will's eyes, as they were both breathless, the flush of lust causing their lips and chests to deepen with color.

"You're mine now, Will. Whether you like it or not, that's the way it's going to be."

He brought Will down on the sofa, pushing his own suit pants and boxers aside with a surprising carelessness, as if he couldn't care about the expensive fabric anymore, at least at the moment. Grabbing a hold of Will's wrists, he pinned them above his head with one hand while fondling his body with the other. Will moans softly, arching to Hannibal's touch. He thought he could keep his distance from him, but this was proof that even he was susceptible to Hannibal's charm. His powerful sensuality.

Hannibal traced his tongue across Will's nipples, causing the other man to quiver in delight. His hands slide down Will's chest, trying to make quick work of his trousers. Will lifted his hips so Hannibal could pull his clothing off completely.

"No more running from me. We're doing this together," Hannibal said, his voice deep and husky, sending shivers up Will's spine.

They were both completely naked, and Hannibal leaned back to admire the man below him. Will's skin is flushed, his cheeks rosy and eyes filled with lust, and he has never looked more beautiful. He pressed his lips to Will's again, this time with more passion and urgency. His fingers skimmed down Will's body to curl around his hardening, fattening erection, and stroke him. Will gasped and his body writhed at the sensations that coursed through him.

"Hannibal, Jesus..."

"Do you want me inside of you, Will?" Hannibal asked, his eyes smoldering, watching Will intently.

"What...?" Although it was a nonsensical response, Will was mostly overwhelmed by how fast things were moving that he couldn't form a coherent thought. It was hard to be pragmatic in a situation such as this. His heart so desperately wanted Hannibal inside him, deep into his body, fucking him right out of his mind.

It was a good thing Hannibal knew how to take the hint. He spread Will's legs apart, exposing him to the air, and dipped his finger inside his hole, eliciting the most unhinged of noises from Will. Hannibal was pleased at the response, licking his bottom lip and continuing his act until Will was leaking pre-come onto his stomach. His long fingers dig into Will's tender muscles, parting them, stretching them.

"Hannibal... fuck..." Will groaned. "Don't stop. Keep going."

His cock leaked profusely, and he felt like he could come right then, but Hannibal didn't let him. The languid strokes of his fingers tormented Will, pushing him so quickly over the edge but denying him the release. At the same time, Hannibal's cock lay engorged, hot and heavy, also leaking pre-come, and his self-control was waning by the minute. He rubbed their cocks together, grinding his hips against Will to tease him further.

"Please, just fuck me already," Will whined.

"Patience, my boy." If the carnal desire in Hannibal's eyes was any indication, the man himself struggled to maintain restraint.

"I want you now."

Hannibal didn't know if he'd ever hear anything as sweet as that. Seeing his beautiful boy lying like that on the sofa, curls messy, mouth hanging open, eyes half-closed, was enough to destroy him. He was going to have his way with Will. Savor him, worship him, debauch him. He practically forgot about his wounded arm and the bandage on it.

"You're beautiful," he growled, grinding his hips harder against Will's.

Just when Will thought he couldn't handle it anymore and was prepared to break his wrists free of Hannibal's grip and stroke himself, Hannibal positions himself at Will's entrance and slowly pushes himself inside, stretching him out and filling him completely. Will gasped at the intrusion, clenching around him. His fingers clawed at his broad back as Hannibal started rocking his hips, moving his thick cock in and out of Will.

"F-Fuck," Will cried out, his back arching, his hands pulling Hannibal closer, legs locked around his hips, wanting to push him deeper into him.

Will felt so full, so complete, his heart pounding against his chest as Hannibal fucked him. The pleasure was intense, and his head swam with the sensation. It was too much, and he was so close to the edge that he could barely stand it. Will's finger tingled and clenched with the need to touch him all over, but Hannibal didn't let him. Nor did he let Will come.

Hannibal pounded into him, his thrusts slow but powerful, drawing out the pleasure. "Let me hear you scream."

Will tried to resist but his voice clawed out of his throat. His cries echoed in the room while his whole body convulsed and shook with ecstasy. Hannibal was relentless, his own climax building. Will could feel the man's cock swell, his breathing coming in ragged gasps. Hannibal thrust faster, his eyes fluttering shut, his face contorting with pleasure.

"My precious boy," Hannibal grunted. "You belong to me. Nobody else. Anyone with the audacity to touch you will not see the light of day. Everything about you, Will, your body, your soul, your heart, are all mine."

"Y-Yes," Will moaned.

"Say it. Say you belong to me."

Will failed to separate pleasure from logic. His mind was too foggy, shrouded by a lust-fueled haze, just like Hannibal.

"I'm yours." He didn't realize then the kind of weight those words carried.

"Good boy."

Hannibal's movements became erratic, his body trembling as he approached the edge. Will could feel the man's hot breath against his skin. Felt his teeth sink into his shoulder. Hannibal's thrusts grew harder, more insistent, and the pressure inside him built to an unbearable level. And yet, he still denied Will the bliss of climax, pushing Will over the edge but leaving him hanging on the precipice. Hannibal's movements now became violent, more desperate, his balls smacking against the curve of Will's ass. Will cried out, his orgasm building, his muscles spasming.

"I can't," he whimpered. "I need to—Christ, I need to come."

"No. You will finish when I tell you to."

The only sounds in the room were their harsh, ragged breaths and the slick sounds of skin against skin. Will's toes curled, his cock aching for relief, and Hannibal kept pounding away at him. The friction was excruciating, the tension almost unbearable. Will couldn't take it anymore. He wanted Hannibal to let him release the pent-up desire, to let him have what he wanted. But Hannibal refused him. Will knew the one way he could get him to melt, to have him yield into the pleasure rather than the torment, even though the torment felt so inexplicably good.

"Let me feel you." Will's blue eyes bore into Hannibal's soul. "Let me touch you. Please."

Hannibal stared at him, unable to resist. His grip on Will's wrists loosened, and Will brought his hands to Hannibal's robust body, his broad shoulders, fondling him and caressing him and raking his fingernails along his skin in a way Will knew he would like it. Will's hands and the burn of his fingernails along his back made Hannibal's eyes close in insane ecstasy. He fell apart at the seams from the mere touch, unraveling like a fabric. And for that moment, Will could see right through him as though he were made of glass, exposing the deepest parts of his being.

"More," Hannibal groaned. "Touch me, feel me."

Will fondled Hannibal's body, his chest, his arms, his back, his ass. His fingertips explored every crevice of Hannibal's body, every inch of skin, his flesh burning from his touch. Hannibal's body was warm and sweaty, and Will couldn't stop touching him. He wanted to feel every part of him, inside and out. His hands traced Hannibal's muscles, his chest, his abdomen, and he ran his palms over his nipples, which hardened from his touch. It drove Hannibal crazy.

Hannibal growled, his thrusts becoming harder, his cock slamming into Will. "I'm going to come inside you. You'll have no other man after me. Do you understand?"

"Y-Yes." Will's eyes were half-closed, his pupils blown, and he felt his climax nearing.

"Come with me." This sounded like an order.

As Hannibal pounded into him, hitting his sweet spot, Will felt his orgasm coming. His mouth dropped open with relief as he came hard, spurting cum all over their stomachs, while Hannibal spilled his seed inside him. They were both shaking, panting, their bodies quivering with pleasure.

They collapsed onto the sofa, exhausted and spent, their bodies slick with sweat and cum. Will couldn't believe what had just happened, and neither could Hannibal. Hannibal didn't know what he was thinking, letting himself get carried away like that. But he couldn't deny that it fulfilled him, and that was all that mattered. It was a hell of a way to blow off steam.

Will shifted on the sofa, adjusting in the limited space with Hannibal, snuggling close in his arms. Hannibal's bangs hung over his eyes, as he caressed Will's stubble. His previous darkness and the tinge of anger had subsided completely, as if it never happened.

"I could not have foreshadowed this," Will murmured, breathy.

"Neither could I," Hannibal replied. "Do you regret it?"

Will paused. Did he? Would he? If not now, then later? Maybe. But who was to tell what tomorrow might bring. For now, he did not regret it, so he shook his head slowly. He leaned in, his thin lips fitting into the seams of Hannibal's lips in a slow, lazy kiss, breathing in his breath. As Hannibal held his face, Will held his wrist. He felt the older man lean in to bring their foreheads together in an unexpected and surprising moment of tenderness. Will wanted to freeze this moment in time forever because he had never, *ever* felt such quietude in his life. He felt calm.

No. Not calm.

*Safe.*

And this sense of security was quickly marred by the lingering doubt again. Some distant alarm bells were going off in Will's mind. He cursed the fact he couldn't get a fucking second of respite from the nagging feelings. He forced them down, deep down, where he couldn't think of them for a while.

Hannibal sighed, reaching out for a piece of paper on the coffee table then starting to fold it, bending corners.

Will watched him out of curiosity. "Didn't know you were into origami."

"I dabble," Hannibal replied.

"Is there anything you can't do?"

"Yes. Fishing."

Will quickly understood the reference. He was a professional at fishing. Hannibal may have found out from his profile or from Alana.

"Yeah, right. If you are skilled in psychiatry, surgery, fine art, literature and cooking, I'm pretty sure fishing isn't a big deal."

Hannibal smirked. "I'm trying to be self-effacing."

Will rested his head on his shoulder, watching him fold and shape the piece of paper until it became a human heart.

"That's incredible." He marveled at the skill, taking the heart and examining it. "That's actually impressive."

"I'm honored."

Will handed the paper heart back to him. "Shouldn't we... leave? We're probably getting way too late. And I'm pretty sure the cameras have caught a lot of our... deeds."

"You need not worry about them. I had taken the necessary precaution of shutting them down for a while."

Will raised a brow. "I see. I still think we should get out of here."

Hannibal sighed softly. "I would not be averse to spending the night, right here, next to you." He skims the back of his fingers along Will's cheekbone, basking in the afterglow of their intimacy. And in that afterglow, Will looked like a celestial being. ***"What a stunning creature you are."***

The words echoed in Will's mind. He never expected to be complimented I'm this way by anyone. He had been called a weirdo. A freak? Yes. Grumpy? Absolutely.

But stunning? Never.

"Drop me home," he whispered.

It seemed like he had all the power over Hannibal, because every word he said was like a Siren's song, luring the older man to him and making him do whatever he wanted. Hannibal could never refuse him.

"As you wish," Hannibal replied.

The two of them got up from the sofa. Hannibal watched him with a smile as Will wiped himself with a tissue, staring at his hips, his lean muscles, sinewed shoulders, surprisingly strong arms, and of course, that glorious pink cock. Not to mention Will picking up his boxers and trousers from the floor, giving Hannibal an unabashed view of his ass, and the way it parted a bit. Hannibal's lips parted, like he wanted to take a bite out of that supple skin.

God, he needed miraculous amounts of self-restraint.

The drive home was... new. It felt different. Hannibal pulled over Will's little house and as Will got out, he did too.

"Just a minute," he said.

Will stopped and turned to him. Hannibal walked up to him, bringing a hand to his face before giving him a gentle kiss, a goodnight kiss. Will didn't avoid it this time. Seemed he wanted it just as much, if only for the serenity that it gave him. No matter how short-lived that serenity was.

Hannibal smiled at him, as if unwilling to let him go. "Are we still keeping things impersonal?"

"It's up for debate." Will tried to remain stoic.

"In that case, I'll wait until this debate has a decisive victory in my favor."

Will watched him return to his car and leave, before turning to his house. His home provided him the much-needed refuge from the world, when he was too fatigued to deal with people. He couldn't wait to open the door and feel the rush of seven warm hugs from his dogs. Unfortunately for him, that much-awaited joy was interrupted by a phone call. He fished his phone out of his pocket and looked at Beverly's name on the screen.

"It's late, Bev," he said, tiredly.

"Yeah, and this is going to wake you up," she replied. "Remember the guy who shot Hannibal and tried to steal security footage?"

"Arthur. What about him?"

"He had a copy of the footage with him in a flash drive. And what we found on it was... well, company secrets you wouldn't normally expect."

"I'm on my way."

Will found his car sitting outside his home and got in, driving all the way to the BAU.

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"This better be good." Will followed Beverly into an office.

"It's something." Beverly led him to a computer and took a seat.

On the screen was footage of the camera from a floor of Lecter Enterprises that Will did not recognize. The stamp at the corner read *'Tenth Floor'* and it was the outside view of a conference room. The door of the room was half-open and the glass enclosure was obstructed by blinds. The camera wasn't showing a top-view. Rather it seemed to be showing from an angle that would be equivalent to someone's chest level. Possibly be a hidden camera inside of a potted plant or something.

"There's nothing much for the first five minutes but then..." Beverly pointed at the screen. "See that? Blink and you'll miss it."

Will peered closely, eyebrows furrowing, at what looked like a pair of legs sliding across the room out of the camera's view, like a body was being dragged. But the door blocked the view of who was being dragged and who was doing the dragging.

"When was this?" Will asked, the nagging doubts within him coming back with a vengeance.

"This one was around a few days ago, uh... April 12th, around 6.30 PM," Beverly replied.

The gears in Will's mind started to run. The time and date was when Hannibal had taken Burnham and Gordon down to that private meeting on the tenth floor. Something ran cold in Will's body, like an icy hand creeping up his spine, and he wished to every higher power his gut instincts were wrong. They always had the impeccable—and sometimes, vexing—quality of being right.

This time, he hoped it was simply a misunderstanding. That someone set this up and it was just some kind of fabrication with the intent of blackmailing.

"I need to speak to Arthur," he said. "Now."

Beverly led him to the interrogation room, where Jack Crawford was present, watching from the observation room. He eyed Will as he entered. Another FBI agent standing next to Jack gave Will a weird look, which the latter ignored. Will was used to weird and disapproving gazes.

"Thought you wanted a break," Jack said, in a tone that disapproved of Will's decision.

"Technically, I haven't returned from my break," Will replied. "I need five minutes."

Jack gave him permission and Will entered the interrogation room, sitting across the table from Arthur. Arthur didn't meet his gaze, and by the looks of it, he probably had his arm patched up by the medics right within the walls of the BAU, on Jack's orders. The bandage was hidden behind the orange jumpsuit.

"You're not getting me to talk," Arthur spoke coldly, without an ounce of fear for death.

"Not even about what you saw in the surveillance footage that you had to steal it?" Will asked. "I don't care about why you did it. I just want to know what you saw."

"Why do you care?"

“Because I want to hear your side of the story. Without the bullshit.”

Will sat there, head slightly tilted, expression nonchalant and unchanging. It gave Arthur the impression that Will wasn't fooling around, and Arthur's intentions were irrelevant to him. There was no good cop, bad cop agenda, no persuasion with false promises of leniency with his prison sentence. Whatever was bound to happen to Arthur would happen on its own accord, whether he chose to talk or not. Will wasn't here to coddle.

“Why the hell should I even tell you?” Arthur said. “For all I know, you probably want me killed. You're loyal to that motherfucker.”

“I'm loyal to the truth,” Will replied. “Nothing else. I can't say I can help with your sentence. But I can make it a whole lot worse if you don't cooperate. I personally witnessed you shooting Hannibal. Do you really want to know how far I can go?”

The threat was loud, resounding, and clear. Arthur shifted in his seat, trying to maintain his composure while his Adam's apple bobbed, indicating his underlying fear. “Fine. I didn't see much, but I know there's something wrong going on, on the tenth floor of that building. Everytime I tried to bring it up, nobody believed me. They were so blinded by Lecter's charisma or whatever.”

“Go on.”

Arthur hesitated, but then he leaned in. “Lecter's up to something. Something terrible. I don't think Burnham and Gordon resigned. They had—”

There was a sudden shattering of glass, and in the span of a split-second, a bullet ripped right through the center of Arthur's forehead. Blood sprayed from the back of his head as he tumbled backwards, hitting the ground, his handcuffed hands falling in front of him.

Will's eyes snapped wide as he quickly jumped from his seat and spun around to see the FBI agent who had given him the weird look before, now holding a gun, aimed at Arthur. Jack responded immediately, grabbing hold of the agent's arms. Beverly assisted, and dragged the agent away.

It was too fast. Too fast for Will to do anything even if he wished he had. Everything spun around him, his mind overflowing with a flurry of thoughts. Things that made sense and things that did not. His heart pounded in his ears and his breathing was too fast. He tried to calm the noise in his head, trying to find some semblance of clarity. He glanced at Arthur's body, fallen backwards, with his eyes open in a rigid stare and a stream of scarlet blood streaming from the bullet lodged at the center of his forehead, and knew someone did not want Arthur to talk.

The interrogation room burst open as Jack barged in, asking Will if he was okay. But his voice seemed muffled, distant, like an echo. His lips moved and his face was contorted in worry, but Will could not register what he was saying.

In all the noise and confusion, the only thing Will could hold onto was the quiet voice in his gut. A voice telling him that his suspicions were not for naught. But he wasn't sure he'd like

what he'd find if he pursued this. He didn't know if he wanted to pursue it in the first place. Maybe the reason he didn't want to pursue it was because his heart got in the way. He wanted to protect everything good he had because those good things were too far and few in between in his life, and if he chose the path of truth, he may destroy those things.

Was the truth worth losing his peace?

## Chapter End Notes

Find me on my socials for fanart and other shenanigans:

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# Matter and Antimatter

## Chapter Notes

- Apologies for the extremely late update. Life has been very hard on me financially. Also, I'm going to RDC6 in August, so I had to work overtime to save money <3
- Thank you for being really patient with me. I hope you enjoy this chapter <3 Things are about to take a drastic turn soon



~~~~~

Everything felt different to Will now. The imposing presence of the Lecter Enterprises building, the ornate chandelier and marble floors of the lobby, the ever-smiling receptionists saying something he didn't catch. The silver elevators, the ding when the floor arrived, the noise, chit-chat of the employees around. Every detail was more vexingly prominent now. Speaking of which, the very pretentiousness of the employees made him nauseous as of late.

As he went up to Hannibal's office, the movement of the elevator seemed a little too fast for him now, like he wanted to stall it. He watched the LED numbers above the button panel increase and with every number that went higher, his anxiety crept higher too. It started out in the pit of his stomach and made its way up to his chest, his heart, his throat, like vines. He contemplated on getting off on another floor, then taking another elevator back down to the lobby and getting the fuck out of the building and never return.

But then the truth would forever be buried within the overly illuminated walls of whatever this building was trying to be. Because it sure as hell didn't feel like an office to him anymore. As the floor arrived, Will came out into the hallway, moving to Hannibal's office, and was greeted by his sphinx-like smile, his charcoal and red-plaid three-piece suit with a paisley tie. Everything was different.

The opulent office felt like a facade. As if the walls held secrets but were forever silenced. Suddenly the awe Will felt when he first saw the office was gone, replaced by unease.

"Good morning, Will," Hannibal spoke.

"Good morning." It sounded like Will was simply reciting the words and not actually meaning them. "How's your arm?"

"It doesn't bother me. I figured after the unfortunate incident, we must double down on our security. Start by conducting a scrupulous background check on every single employee in the building just to be sure."

"Mmm."

Hannibal paused, observing him. "You seem distracted."

"I'm thinking. We need more security measures in every corner of this building, even the private areas. Blind spots."

"I see."

"I observed the surveillance footage in the control room. There seems to be no surveillance that's directly in your meeting room on the tenth floor."

"As I said once, it's private."

"So private that you'd risk a possible attack on yourself again? And not be able to prove anything against said attacker should a possible crime be held in court?"

Hannibal smacked his lips lightly, a little miffed by Will's tone. His hand brushed the scalpel he used to sharpen his pencils, moving it up and down a little, even slightly gripping it between his forefinger and thumb before releasing quickly. A fleeting urge of wanting to do something he would regret.

"I understand your concern, Will, but this is my enterprise. I am also sworn to privacy in light of past events when my company secrets were at risk of being exposed to my rivals."

Rising from his seat, he approached Will. His usual cologne emanated from him: A sensual Oud, earthy and intoxicating, wafting into Will's nostrils as he came closer. Will's lips instinctively parted and a soft breath exhaled them, as if inviting Hannibal's mouth. He closed his eyes when he felt the kiss, Hannibal's luscious lips fitting into his, his tongue snaking its way into Will's mouth and rubbing against his. His breath was fresh, and the soft smacks and pops of their lips was all Will could hear and all he wanted to hear. In that kiss alone, he was transported to heaven.

Hannibal threaded his fingers in Will's soft waves, and nibbled his bottom lip before dropping kisses down his neck. He slid his other arm inside Will's jacket, around his slim waist.

Will sighed. "Hanni... I mean... sir..."

"Shhh..." Hannibal whispered. "I wish for us to be more than mere professional acquaintances."

"I need to... check the security measures. Just to make sure."

"Is this concern or paranoia?"

"Both. Mostly paranoia." Will allowed a smile to alleviate any possible doubt. "Maybe I don't want to be witness to another attack on you, you know. You're not exactly invincible and neither am I. I wouldn't be able to handle it if something happened—" He cut off and looked away.

Hannibal's smile clearly showed his pride and his mounting attraction to Will. He was so down for the man it was embarrassing. Even that atrocious aftershave was beginning to grow on him. When combined with Will's own natural scent, it became his trademark perfume of sorts. A way to recognize Will anywhere, anytime. And witnessing his concern for Hannibal was like the icing on top of a very, very scrumptious cake.

"Nothing will happen to me," Hannibal replied. "I can defend myself should the need arise."

"Yeah, but not from a distance. Look, the only way I'd be able to gain some satisfaction is if I make sure all the employees are checked and the security measures are properly in place."

"I do admire your inexorable quality, even though sometimes it can be overbearing. Did you forget who's in charge?"

Will toned it down a notch and gave a deferential nod. "Sorry, sir. I will do whatever suits you best. It's your decision."

Hannibal ran the back of his fingers along Will's cheek. "Is there something you need to tell me? Something that's plaguing your mind?"

His fingers were gentle, gliding along Will's face, while at the same time, oddly unsettling. They traced Will's cheekbone and jawline, allowing his stubble to graze Hannibal's thumb.

"No," Will answered.

“Very well. I will request security cameras to be installed on the tenth floor, but you’re not allowed to go there. Is that clear? One of my men will handle the installation. You may only observe from the control room.”

Will maintained a stoic countenance well enough to hide the fleeting disappointment. Any change in expression, any change in tone whatsoever could be picked up by Hannibal. The man had the senses of a hawk, scanning Will’s face for the slightest hints of weakness or doubt. Will felt Hannibal’s hand skim down his back, his hips, then unexpectedly give his ass a firm squeeze. He almost flinched a little, clearing his throat. Hannibal gave a soft laugh, an almost inaudible huff from his nose, and a shit-eating grin.

“Excuse me.” Will awkwardly left the office, taking a furtive look at Hannibal.

He walked to Alana Bloom’s office, hesitating a bit before knocking the door.

“Come in,” she answered.

He went in and Alana was sorting out and filing documents. She bowed her head just a tiny bit, looking at Will from the top of her reading glasses. “You definitely don’t look as crotchety as last time.”

“There’s no point in it. It won’t solve anything. But I do have to ask if you’ve ever been on the tenth floor.”

“Not really. All my work is right here.”

“Not even out of curiosity?”

“Curiosity will get me fired. And trust me, there’s nothing too intriguing about the tenth floor that I would want to explore. I respect Hannibal’s privacy.”

“Oh, didn’t know you two were on a first name basis.”

Alana raised a brow. “I was his colleague once, when he was practicing psychiatry. Why? Are you jealous?”

Will dismissed that with a huff, but even he couldn’t hide how obvious his face looked.

Alana neatly put away a folder on the shelves. “Are you feeling adventurous, Will? Wanting to explore every part of this building?”

“As head of security, I should be allowed.”

“And as CEO, Hannibal is above you. If he says no, it’s no.”

“I suppose... It’s just... the whole incident with Arthur didn’t sit right with me. You know I’m very thorough. I want to make sure everything’s right with us.”

Alana stopped and stared at him. “Are you suspecting that something is... off here?”

“Instinct.”

“Yours happen to put up a red flag where there is none.”

Will dismissed her comment again. He knew Alana was loyal to the company and to Hannibal. He was especially privy to the fact that she and Hannibal had a brief affair of sorts prior to his entry into the company. Whether or not that affair was one of pleasure or one of convenience is a mystery. They do seem friendly with one another. Too friendly. Such a familiarity sparked discomfort within Will. It could be why he couldn't continue the conversation any further, and left the office without another word. His mind is digging too deep into Hannibal and Alana. Deeper.

Oh, for fuck's sake, please tell me I'm not being jealous.

He took the elevator down to the fifth floor where the engineering section was. As he spoke with the security and the engineers, he learned that only two people had access to the tenth floor—Hannibal and the lead engineer. The lead engineer was only allowed limited access to the area outside the private office. The private office was off limits. Still, he decided to nick the engineer's keycard anyway. All it took was the classic accidental bumping into the person, the way a pickpocket would do.

“Ah, sorry, Mr. Graham,” the engineer said, after Will bumped into him.

“No, no, I wasn't looking.” Will straightened his glasses, appearing as guileless as he could. “Have a lot on my mind today.”

“Tell me about it. The whole Arthur thing has been the topic of every debate and gossip in this building. It's gonna stay that way for a while now.”

“For someone who's not interested in gossip or debate, any tips on avoiding them?”

The engineer chuckled. “There's an actual fucking spa in this place. Maybe it could help.”

“I'll keep that in mind.”

Will Graham walked away smoothly, sliding the stolen keycard into his jacket sleeve and heading back to the elevators again. It was now or never. He did not have a lot of time. His window of opportunity was getting smaller with each second.

He slipped into the elevator and swiped the keycard against the panel above the buttons and then pressed the tenth floor button. He had no clue what waited for him up there. He touched his jacket, feeling the shape of the gun concealed behind it, holstered to his waistband. An instinctive movement to make sure it was there. His eyes followed the numbers go up and wished to God nobody came into the elevator.

The elevator stopped at the eighth floor and Will's heart dropped.

Fuck.

Please let it not be Hannibal.

To be honest, it was bad if it was anyone other than Hannibal too. Like, Alana, for example.

The ding as the doors opened, and Will found himself gripping his jacket tighter. The doors opened wide to reveal the janitor, with a toothpick in his mouth, as he wheeled his cart in. He gave a half-hearted nod to Will who did the same before pressing the topmost floor button, the twelfth floor, which happened to be where Hannibal's office was. The silence in the elevator was *awkward as fuck*, with Will standing in the corner, wishing for his floor to arrive and hoping to get off calmly, and the janitor who seemed like he couldn't care less if a fucking Pterodactyl swooped into the building from the windows.

Will was kinda glad for the man's indifference. He got out at the tenth floor and gave the janitor an awkward smile, for which the other man gave a lazy salute before the doors closed.

Blowing a gust of air and relaxing a bit, Will looked around. There wasn't much at the tenth floor save for a couple of conference rooms, and one room at the far end that was the only one accessible with a keycard. Could be Hannibal's private meeting room. Will mapped the place, checking out every room before going to the room at the far end. Unfortunately, there were no windows on the inside of the hallway, which would give a peek into the room. He scanned the cameras there, which oddly, all faced the hallway. He took a wild guess that there wasn't a single camera inside the room.

Taking his phone out, he made a phone call to Beverly. Honestly, he was so thankful to the woman for being his confidant. The only person who was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

"I'm on the tenth floor," he said. "I don't see a lot. There's a room at the end only Hannibal can open. There's no way I can get his card. We need something else."

Beverly sighed. "Like what?"

A sudden idea flashed in Will's head. "This is going to sound insane."

"More insane than our jobs?"

"Well, not really, but listen..."

Will explained his plan to Beverly. He heard a pause on the other end before she spoke,

"That is fucking crazy. You're playing it too dangerously."

"Can you help me?" Will asked.

"It's stupid! I'll do my best."

"No, Bev, *can you do it?* "

Another pause. Then, "Alright, fine."

"Good."

Will took another look around, trying to avoid the cameras. The last thing he wanted was for his to be plastered all over the surveillance footage. But... then again, he was head of security so he could always delete it.

Hannibal sat cross-legged across the table from an investor who changed his mind about investing but couldn't keep his mouth shut instead of mocking Hannibal a little in the process. Hannibal's impassive countenance defied his inner burning vexation with the complacency of the man sitting there.

"Remind me again, Mr. Hoffman, what is this "promising prospect" you mentioned earlier? Or rather... who?"

"I'm sure you know Raymond Enterprises?"

Hannibal softly smacked his lips. Ah, Raymond, my Wisenheimer rival. "Unfortunately, I do. However, your judgment that Raymond Enterprises has the experience and the capability to achieve what my company has is misguided."

"Is it? He seems to be doing great in my opinion."

"Can I not convince you to stay? I do feel like withdrawing investments at such short notice might be a bit impulsive."

"Impulsive?" Hoffman chuckled. "It was the right fucking move. The only regret I have is that I didn't do it sooner."

There's a slow intake of breath as Hannibal gives an almost nonchalant nod, before saying, "May I request you to join me for a proper negotiation this evening at six? I have a private office on the tenth floor. I request that you consider hearing me out for a few minutes, after which you may decide how you wish to proceed."

Hoffman falls silent for a moment, with a soft scoff and a 'tch'. "Fine. But you have ten minutes to change my mind. Only ten."

"Fair."

The two men stood and shook hands. There was that unsettling aura about Hannibal again when he gave that trademark sphinx smile to Hoffman. The kind of aura only Will Graham could pick up. Hoffman was too smug to notice the subtlety of Hannibal's emotions. The man was way too proficient at behaving like a marble sculpture of sorts.

As Hoffman walked out the office, he brushed past Will at the threshold, who held Hannibal's freshly ironed suit in his hand. It was unbelievable how Will's mere presence changed Hannibal's mood rather quickly, as though the man had him under a spell. Hannibal had to

constantly hold himself back from grabbing the man and taking him right there on the couch. Perhaps after the evening's meeting was done, he could do just that. And he didn't intend on holding back.

"You have a remarkable forbearance to be putting up with these parties," Will said, holding Hannibal's tuxedo. "I don't think I can handle another show of extravagance."

Hannibal smiled. "I promise it won't be as exaggerated as last time. I shall endeavor to keep the conversations short so we can spend time together. The previous party was... interrupted by Dr. Bloom and Agent Katz."

"Yeah..."

"I have already picked out your outfit for the night. Blue suits you well."

"I look forward to it."

Will couldn't fault Hannibal's choice of outfits. Although most of the times he felt as though the expensive suits were unnecessary. In his wardrobe, all he had was an old blazer that was well-maintained enough to look like it wasn't three years old or something. Even if he wanted to get a new one, he'd probably buy a readymade suit on discount. As long as it looked decent and fit well. Hannibal, on the other hand, with his bespoke clothing, seemed to behave like Will's sugar daddy at times.

Not that... Will was complaining...

It was kind of flattering.

It usually took quite an effort from Hannibal's part to attend/host parties, all with the face of a man who knew it all but played it off with self-effacement. And he played it so well that only those who knew him intimately would know he loved the attention. It was a part of why he attended parties in the first place. It would be mendacious if he denied that his pride never got in the way. That the attention of swooning women and sycophants trying to get into his good books didn't make him smirk.

But then.... then there was Will.

The tables always reversed when it came to Will, and Hannibal became the one seeking his attention. Hannibal's pride seemed to dissolve whenever he was around the younger man. Which was why, lately, he didn't quite immerse himself fully into parties like he usually did. Now he simply wanted to get away from the glitz and glamour so that he and Will could be alone.

Those swooning women and sycophants now irritated him and he had to hide it. His eyes caught glimpses of Will in stolen opportunities, meeting with his furtive blue gaze. Will absent-mindedly kept rubbing his thumb on his wine glass, as if distracted, while speaking (or rather, forcing himself to speak) to a guest. But the tension between the two men was so hot and thick it could be cut with a knife. Both of them felt it, both of them knew what the other was thinking.

They could take a few minutes to make their way up to a private suite, away from the party, and the crowd. But the second they were both excused from having to make a constant effort to talk to the guests, they couldn't wait to let off some steam. So, the private suite seemed too... far away. The quickest spot was the restroom and Hannibal made sure nobody could come in until they were done.

As Hannibal slammed Will against the restroom wall, almost devouring his neck by kissing and sucking it, the alarm bells went off in Will's head again and he had to consciously shut them off. His breaths were shallow, his heart hammering in his chest as Hannibal ripped off his suit, and his shirt. Next were the trousers. Will went at Hannibal's clothes too, finding it unfair that he was still clothed.

"What have you done to me, Hannibal?" Will said as he pulled at the older man's shirt, taking it off and leaving him only in his trousers.

Hannibal growled. "I should be asking you that. You play an unfair game, darling."

Will's fingers trembled, unable to undo Hannibal's trouser button. He was a man of his words. He did not believe in destiny or fate, but it did feel that the universe had put him on a collision course with Hannibal Lecter, the only person that could completely understand him. Will knew they were about to collide, and there was a hint of fear deep down within him. The desire they had for each other was a destructive force, the collision of matter and antimatter that tore through the fabric of space and time.

Their lips met fiercely, tugging and biting and sucking. Hannibal groped him, stroked and caressed his body, and Will felt a shockwave, a darkness, a void. He wasn't himself anymore, nor was Hannibal. They were gone, consumed by the black hole their desires and their turbulent love had created.

Hannibal pushed Will against the bathroom counter, his mouth running ravenously down his skin, sucking his nipple, eliciting a moan from him. Will pulled Hannibal's hair, making him look at him. Hannibal's eyes were dark and enigmatic, feral and savage.

Hannibal spun Will around on the counter, bending him over. He unbuttoned his own trousers and lowered his boxers just enough, giving his erection a much-needed freedom. He knelt near Will, parting his ass cheeks, and running his tongue along the seam. Will choked out a moan, gasping, trembling, trying to find purchase in vain. Hannibal plunged his tongue inside him and Will shuddered, pre-come leaking profusely. Hannibal inserted a finger, then another, thrusting, scissoring, and Will was writhing.

Hannibal stood, tugging Will's hips back and rubbing his cock along the seam. It was so maddening since Will knew the man enjoyed tormenting him first always.

"Fuck, Hannibal, don't just..." he grunted.

"You do not get to protest, my boy." Hannibal reached forward, curling his large hand around Will's throat and pulling him back, so that Will's back was flush against Hannibal's chest. Hannibal's words reverberated in Will's ear. "And I will decide when you get to come."

Will groaned. Hannibal's words went straight to his cock.

Finally, Hannibal thrust in, and Will had to bite his lip not to scream. The counter broke their fall, and Hannibal started thrusting, pounding into Will mercilessly, gripping his hips, scratching his nails down Will's skin. It was painful, yet it was so fucking good. Will felt pain and pleasure, love and hate, the whole kaleidoscope of emotions whenever he was with Hannibal.

"More," Will choked out, "Harder."

"Silence. What did I tell you?"

Will was already seeing stars. Hannibal had a hand on his throat, slamming into him over and over. Hannibal could sense he was close and gripped his throat a bit tighter.

"If you come before I allow it, I will punish you. Look at yourself in the mirror while I debauch you."

Will whimpered. It was so bizarre at how exposed he felt just by looking at his reflection in the mirror, at his engorged cock leaking, at Hannibal's dark gaze and clenched jaws. He felt... vulnerable. At the mercy of the man behind him. Hannibal released his throat, grabbing his hips again, hitting him deeper, harder. Will was so close, so close. He gripped the counter hard, trying to hold back, but he was reaching the breaking point.

"Jesus fucking Christ, I can't hold myself."

"You will not come until I say so," Hannibal commanded. "Not one second earlier."

"Hannibal."

"You have no idea what I can do to you. I will take you up to the suite, tie you to the bed, and not let you come for hours."

Hannibal's erratic breaths told Will he was very close too, and Will could feel him throbbing inside him. He counted on him to break first, before he did. He turned to kiss Hannibal, moaning into his mouth. Hannibal grabbed his curls, pounding him like an animal.

"Ah, God!" Will clenched his fist.

Hannibal leaned so close to Will's ear, his lips brushed against the shell of his ear. "Come."

One word, one word that completely shattered Will and then put him back together. He came in a flood, spilling over the counter. Hannibal reached forward and stroked Will's cock,

milking him while thrusting into him. Will's legs trembled, barely able to hold him up, while he shot streams of cum onto the marble surface.

Hannibal finally joined him, filling him up with his seed, sinking his teeth into his neck. Both of them were silent for a moment, coming down from their high, trying to catch their breaths. Hannibal pulled out and held onto Will's body firmly before he could collapse backwards.

"Christ, you're a monster," Will panting.

Hannibal kissed his curls, breathing him in. "I take it as a compliment."

He grabbed a bunch of tissues, cleaning the counter before placing Will on it. The younger man was barely able to keep himself together. With Will's legs wrapped loosely around his waist, Hannibal held him in a gentle embrace, kissing his cheek and forehead tenderly, caressing his hair and soothing him.

"Deep breaths, Will. You're alright," Hannibal rubbed his back.

The sex was always otherworldly with him, and the after-care? Bliss. Will took slow breaths, resting his head on Hannibal's shoulders and hugging him back. This was where the intimacy was actually striking. Just being held at his most vulnerable. Being comforted and soothed.

"I need you," Will exhaled, shaky. "I need you..."

Hannibal smiled, holding him a bit firmly enough to comfort him. "I'm right here, my boy."

Will's eyes were fixed at nothing. Once the euphoria ended, he was left with the apprehension of something about to go wrong. Something that would cause their entire worlds to implode. He didn't know if he was ready for such a thing. He didn't want to face it, and instead, live in this moment forever. He parted from the hug once he got his bearings and got down from the counter, cleaning himself up, before putting his clothes on. Watching Hannibal do the same.

Hannibal fixed Will's shirt and suit, pleased with how his boy looked, even with his curly hair slightly messy. "Perfect."

When they exited the restroom, Hannibal let out a hand for him. As Will was about to take it, his phone rang.

"Excuse me..." He said, retracting his hand and walking to a distance to answer his phone. It was Beverly. "Bev?"

"It's ready," came her reply.

Will's heart pounded. That implosion he anticipated, that apprehension of things turning upside down, it was all coming much, much sooner than he thought. He wondered if... the intimacy with Hannibal was so euphoric and electrifying, how devastating and catastrophic would a possible fallout be?

"Will? Is everything alright?" Hannibal asked.

"Yeah," Will replied, taking his hand. "Everything is as it is."

A Beautiful Lie

Chapter Notes

Hello, I'm sorry for the late update. I am working more than usual, and I've also not been in a good place mentally. I needed time for my mental and emotional health. For those of you who stuck with me so far, thank you so much <3 it means a lot :) Feel free to interact

Also, I had Hannibal cooking Indian food because I'm Indian, and I just KNOW he would make a mean curry

(no betas, so excuse any errors)

I also realized the last chapter had a sex scene too! Hehe, enjoy the scenes while you can because um... well, you know, it might be less sexy later O.O



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There was a certain kind of apprehension Will couldn't shake. Things were happening faster than he intended. Beverly's call perturbed him, knowing that the wild ardor he shared with Hannibal, the striking intimacy where he found some semblance of comfort and surprisingly, something close to safety, could potentially shatter and come to a bitter end. The fallout would be almost catastrophic. And Hannibal was a dangerous man, Will knew this much.

Will didn't realize how long he was staring at Hannibal until the older man noticed him, and approached him, bringing a hand to Will's face and caressing it with the back of his fingers.

"You've been distracted," Hannibal said.

"Yeah..." Will replied, leaning in to Hannibal's touch. "I'm just... paranoid."

Hannibal tilted his head as Will did. "Are you worried someone would attempt to harm my life again?"

"Something like that."

Will was trying hard to put his mind in the forefront, and not let his heart take the wheel. His every step was measured, and fraught with doubts and reluctance. But the way Hannibal was looking at him now made him weak. He could feel himself falling deeper and deeper, until it became too difficult to pull himself out. Hannibal pressed soft kisses on his neck, nuzzling his nose there and inhaling Will's scent.

"I could take your troubles away," he whispered. "Free you from your burden. You know you can trust me."

Will couldn't help himself, and kissed Hannibal hard, his lips crushing the older man's. Every emotion, every conflict reflected in the intensity of the kiss, and Will gasped, his tongue rubbing with Hannibal's. He knew this was probably a mistake but God, he wanted nothing more than to give in and trust Hannibal, because there was no one else. It was the most natural thing in the world. But when you're at the very edge of a precipice, you can't help but wonder what would happen when you fell.

*Stop it...* his mind warned.

Will broke the kiss, as if coming back to his senses. He tried not to be too abrupt, though. "I'll be fine."

It wasn't too convincing for Hannibal, but he doesn't prod further. Although he waited for a beat, as though waiting to see if Will would try the kiss again. But when he didn't, Hannibal gave a subtle nod. "Very well. There is someone I'd like to introduce to you. He's been a colleague for ten years, and may I say a close friend too."

Hannibal led Will back to the party, holding his hand possessively, like he wanted everyone to know who Will belonged to. He sought out a tall man in an all black ensemble, and short dark hair, with his back turned to them. The man was away from the crowd, not mingling all that much with the guests, and preferred to spend his time by the bar cradling a glass of Merlot.

"Mr. Dolarhyde." Hannibal smiled. "I see you still consider social gatherings to be beneath you."

When Dolarhyde turned around, a chill ran down Will's spine when he met those ghostly blue eyes, looking right through him. As though they were stripping his exterior and peering into

the truths hidden in the deepest recesses of Will's soul. Dolarhyde's sharp hawk-like gaze fixed on Will and was much more stone-cold than Hannibal's. In contrast, Hannibal seemed somewhat gentler. There was a small scar on his lips, like a cut.

"Please," Dolarhyde's voice was as ghostly as his eyes. Low, husky, but not in a good way. "Call me Francis."

"Will Graham." Will shook his hand. He felt Francis' grip tighten around him as the man eyed him like he was about to burn a hole through Will's skull.

"Mr. Graham. I've heard so many good things about you from Mr. Lecter. It baffles me to see the man who never let anyone get too close in his space, invite someone into his mind. You must be special."

Will couldn't help but notice the way Francis was speaking as if Hannibal wasn't standing right beside him. He saw the older man twitch slightly, but Will could tell he wasn't too affected.

"He is." Hannibal answered for him. "Mr. Dolarhyde has been a very good friend of mine. I thought it would be nice for the three of us to have dinner together. I will cook for you, Francis. I have some great ideas."

"I'm sure you do. I never doubt it."

"Shall we leave this party then?" Hannibal looked between the two men. "I believe the three of us can mutually agree that we don't do parties and would benefit from a more... intimate gathering."

"Hopefully, not too intimate." Will quipped.

Francis smirked at him, amused. "I agree with Mr. Graham."

"But unfortunately, I don't think we have the time." Will glanced at Hannibal. "You have a meeting with Mr. Hoffman soon."

"Don't worry about that, I'm sure I can explain myself to Mr. Hoffman and postpone our meeting a bit," Hannibal replied.

*Fuck...* Will mentally sighed in frustration. This was an unexpected and unwarranted diversion from the plan. Urging Hannibal to go to the meeting would raise suspicions. Will was in a dilemma, having no choice but to go with the flow for now.

As the three men left the party, Will stole an opportunity to send a text to Beverly: **'Delay in plan.'**

He received a reply in minutes: **'What the hell is going on?'**

Will couldn't reply to her, as they walked to the car, with Francis trailing behind them.

Hannibal drove to the estate where he lived. Will was starting to feel a little uncomfortable about the situation. He knew he could take care of himself, and he was used to being in dangerous situations. But this was different. Will felt Francis' watchful eye constantly on him from the backseat as they sat in Hannibal's Bentley. Now and then, he kept shifting in his seat, clearing his throat, and trying to distract himself. The silence was fucking uncomfortable, Will wished to get the hell out of the car. But Hannibal being beside him provided him some comfort, especially when Hannibal's hand skimmed over Will's thigh and gave it a little squeeze.

"It still is rather fascinating to me that Dr. Lecter has found someone he could... explicitly trust," Dolarhyde's unnerving voice broke the silence.

Will sighs, wishing Francis would shut the fuck up.

"Well, Mr. Graham has proven himself to me both professionally and socially," Hannibal replied. "And please, Francis, it's Mr. Lecter. I am no longer actively practicing psychiatry."

"Maybe you should start again, because you will always be Doctor Lecter to me." Francis smirked.

"How long have you two known each other?" Will asked.

Dolarhyde's blue eyes, now darkened to an almost black in the shadow of the backseat, looks right at him. "Long enough to share intimate secrets."

Will knew exactly what that meant. The look on Dolarhyde's face on the rearview mirror was unmistakable.

*He and Hannibal fucked.*

And even Hannibal wasn't fazed by Dolarhyde's comments, but instead doubled down on them. "You were always adventurous, Francis."

"And you were always willing to go on adventures. Might I add, you were also very... passionate." Dolarhyde's eyes flicker towards Will, as if to rub it in.

Despite knowing he shouldn't fall for that, Will still feels the inevitable burn in his stomach, the itch to punch the daylights out of Dolarhyde. His fists clenched at his side, trying to suppress the blazing wildfire within.

He swallowed. "I'm very well aware of Hannibal's enthusiasm. He tends not to dwell in the past. History should remain where it is."

Hannibal gave Will a side-glance.

"This history holds a great significance," Francis quipped. "It has an impact on the present."

Will adjusts his glasses, looking out the window, shifting his focus on the trees going by. It was a relief when they finally reached Hannibal's house. The headlights shone upon a two-

storey building that was both lavish and mysterious at the same time. Will unbuckled his seatbelt and got out, looking at Hannibal over the roof of the car.

"Need to make a phone call," he said. "I'll catch up."

Hannibal's gaze lingered for a second too long before he nodded. "Very well."

Dolarhyde's gaze lingered even longer, as if Will's every breath was a cause of suspicion. Will avoided him entirely. As the two men went into the house, Will moved a little away from the house, finding a spot on the sidewalk that was perfect enough to have a private call without anyone eavesdropping.

The second he called Beverly, her voice was austere. "Damn it, Will. You better have a good explanation."

"We were at a party, and Hannibal invited one of his close friends to dinner," Will replied. "I tried to make him stay on track but there's very little I can do without arousing suspicion. Hannibal's sharp, and his close friend doesn't like me."

"So what now?"

"The meeting Hannibal needs to go to hasn't been canceled. Only postponed. I'll keep an eye out, and I'll make sure everything goes according to plan."

"See that you do."

"It was a setback, Bev." Will turned around towards the house. "I can get—"

Dolarhyde's abrupt presence startled the soul out of Will and he nearly dropped his phone.

"Jesus Christ," he muttered.

"I apologize." Dolarhyde gave an eerie smile. "But Mr. Lecter asked me to call you for dinner."

*This guy's creepy as hell, that's for damn sure.* "I'll be there in a minute."

Once Dolarhyde leaves, Will exhales a sigh before ending the call with Beverly. He was playing this close to the chest. This whole time, Will was too cautious about Hannibal, but now there was a Dolarhyde-shaped pain in the ass he needed to look out for. He walked back to the house, avoiding the ghostly man's occasional glances at him, and keeping a distance from him when he walked.

Hannibal's house was warmer than he last saw it. The rich aroma of food wafted from the plates Hannibal placed on the table. "A little taste of Indian cuisine: Chicken Tikka Masala and fried rice. Kheer for dessert."

"Looks and smells perfect as always." Francis gave Hannibal a smile that seemed like one he gave him often before. Those knowing smiles that served as a secret language, expressing everything without them having to utter a word.

Will felt a twinge. He briefly eyed the knife near his plate. A transient thought of piercing it through Dolarhyde's eyeball flashed in his mind before he caught it and stopped it in his tracks. He couldn't afford to fall prey to petty impulse urges, but the dubious man across the table from him made self-control a challenge. Will could do nothing about his resting bitch face.

As the three men settled down to eat, Francis sparked conversation. "I heard you encountered a setback with your recent investors."

Hannibal gracefully took a spoonful of the rice and put it in his mouth. Eating with elegance came to him naturally. "I put the blame on my competitors. They certainly turned the notch up very high in their attempts to overpower my company. To me, it's merely a show of desperation."

"Good thing you have me," Francis replied. "I happen to be back from my short vacation at the right time, and let's say I have contacts. People of influence who would love to invest, and give us a much needed upper hand."

Hannibal gave an appreciative nod. "And that's why you're indispensable to me, dear Francis."

Will gripped his spoon a bit too tight as he ate. "I had asked this before but I had received a vague response, so I'll try again. How long exactly have you two known each other?"

"At least... seven years now," Francis replied.

"Eight." Hannibal corrected.

"Ah, yes, eight. My mistake. It feels much longer considering our relationship."

Will interjected. "Pretty sure intimacy isn't the usual subject when you talk to other people about the two of you, but if we are broaching the subject, I would love to share my own intimate knowledge of Hannibal, particularly in the quieter hours of the office."

Hannibal's chewing slows and he gives a sly, furtive glance to Will, knowing exactly where this was going, and thoroughly enjoying it. If there was any hint of disapproval on Dolarhyde's face, it was masked by nonchalance. But Will was confident enough he was the sole person who could push the wrong buttons in him.

Francis' eyes narrowed a bit, as though penetrating Will's facade and trying to learn his secrets. Will changed the subject with a lack of subtlety.

"It's not wise to keep Mr. Hoffman waiting," he looked at Hannibal.

There was a beat. Then the older man responded, "Yes, I'm aware. I will meet with him at 6 PM tomorrow. I have already notified him of the unexpected change in schedule."

"I will prepare your suit for tomorrow."

Francis hummed. "Looks like you enjoy your job, Mr. Graham."

“Oh, what can I say? The company’s starting new chapters and I’d like to be a part of it alongside Mr. Lecter, while we... move forward and leave the past behind.”

“Most of our lives are influenced by the past. We may leave it behind, but it will always remain like a scar,” Hannibal said.

“Precisely.” Francis said.

Will took a big sip of the wine and rose from his seat, unable to handle the burn in his stomach and the bubbling ire. “I think I lost my appetite.”

Hannibal caught his wrist. “Will... I don’t want you to leave.”

His voice was like honey, like a siren’s song. His touch was like velvet, the way his thumb lightly rubbed the vein in Will’s wrist. It ensnared the younger man. Hannibal’s amber eyes glimmered with a look that was almost pleading, but Will knew it wasn’t. Hannibal was just that good at persuasion. A grandmaster at it. Will didn’t care that Francis was sitting there. He ignored him completely and sat back down.

After dinner, Will stood near the fireplace with a glass of wine, staring at the embers crackling, casting an orange glow on his skin. When he thought about the past hour alone, he realized how far he strayed from his mission during the course of a dinner. All because he let his guard down to emotions. He’s never felt this way before. Never wasted time with something so nugatory as jealousy, and yet...

Yet...

“I could never have predicted that dinner would take such an unexpected turn.” Hannibal came up beside him.

Will wanted none of this. The wine did little to assuage his vexation towards Francis, so he knew if he engaged in another conversation, he might say something he would regret. He merely gave a rumbling ‘Mm’ in response, kept the wine glass on the coffee table, and headed to the door.

“Are you leaving because of Francis?”

“I’m leaving because it’s late,” Will replied.

“Please stay...” Hannibal put his wine glass down and followed him.

“I’m afraid I might prove to be bad company around Dolarhyde. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Hannibal’s face hardened to that authoritative CEO in a split-second, and his voice reflected that abrupt shift in demeanor. **“Mr. Graham. I said stay.”**

The dominance stopped Will but he didn’t turn around. He quivered when he felt Hannibal get close to him from behind, and his breath made the hairs at the back of Will’s neck rise.

“I asked Francis to leave,” he murmured. “It’s just you and me.”

Hannibal wrapped his hand around Will's throat and tilted his head back to get access to his neck, which Hannibal kissed fervently. He nibbled and sucked on it, and felt Will's Adam's apple bob beneath his hand. He loved that Will felt jealous of Dolarhyde. He relished it.

He moved his lips to Will's ear and whispered, "What do you feel when you see me with Francis? Does it burn you? Do you hate the idea of him being intimate with me?"

Will HATED how Hannibal invaded his mind. The mix of anger and embarrassment was ugly and he wanted to lash out. He wanted to beat the shit out of Francis, he wanted to beat anyone who was near Hannibal. All this and he still couldn't figure out what kindled these intense emotions. He shouldn't care.

*He shouldn't.*

His back hit the wall when Hannibal pushed him up against it and captured his lips in a blistering kiss. Will couldn't breathe, and gasped when the other man licked a trail along his throat before biting his chin. Hannibal undid his plaid shirt and yanked it off him, tossing it to the floor. His eyes were dark, almost black as he stared at Will like he was about to devour him. Will knew that look, and it made him squirm. Hannibal went for his belt next, pushing his corduroy pants, and boxers down and freeing his cock. With one hand, he grabbed a handful of Will's hair and yanked his head back, and with the other, he stroked his cock.

Will grunted from the sharp tug, unable to do much with the rush of pain and pleasure. But he didn't want to be a passive bystander. He wanted to push back. So he did.

He grasped Hannibal's tie. "I don't need you to make me jealous to want you, Hannibal."

Hannibal smiled. "No, but you're beautiful when you are."

Will didn't have time to respond. Hannibal suddenly turned him around, so Will's front pressed up against the wall. Once his pants and underwear were tossed to the floor like inconsequential items, Hannibal knelt and clasped Will's ass, parting his cheeks and licking along his seam.

Will braced his hands on the wall and moaned. "Fuck."

The flat of Hannibal's tongue pressed hard against his hole and licked. Will felt like he was about to burst. It's been so long since he had this kind of contact, this kind of pleasure, and now he was craving it. He craved Hannibal and all his perverse ways. The way he made Will feel things he's never felt before, and the way he was driving him crazy.

"You taste exquisite," Hannibal said, his voice low and rumbling, and Will could feel the vibration of his words. "I know how to make you feel any emotion I wanted. And if I wanted you to be jealous, I know precisely how to make that happen."

Will let out a shaky breath when he felt Hannibal's tongue plunge into his hole, licking inside him, getting him wet. His cock was painfully hard and dripping precum on the floor. He whimpered when Hannibal's hand grabbed his balls and squeezed, and his teeth lightly grazed

Will's skin before sucking a mark on his ass cheek. Will wanted to come so badly, but Hannibal was extremely good at teasing.

And then Hannibal stood up. "And maybe it thrills me when you're jealous."

He removed his three-piece, followed by the rest of his clothing. Will tried to turn and catch a glimpse of Hannibal but the older man held his face to the wall. The next thing Will felt was the wide girth of Hannibal's veiny cock stretching his ass wide open the deeper it plunged. He cried out as Hannibal's hands gripped his hips like a vice, and his hot mouth latched on to Will's neck, sucking hard.

"Ahhhh... fuck..."

"You are tight," Hannibal said, sliding his cock out only to slam it back inside him.

The smack of skin against skin filled the air. Will was helpless. He couldn't move, he could barely breathe. But the way Hannibal touched him was making his body react. Hannibal fondled his body, skimming along his ribs till he reached his nipples. He pinched the hard points in his fingers while he fucked Will within an inch of his life. Will arched his back and let Hannibal have his way. He was being fucked hard, and he was loving every second of it.

"What did you feel when Francis broached the subject of his... affair with me?" Hannibal deliberately pushed Will's buttons.

*Affair:* Even Francis didn't bluntly say it like that when he was talking about how close he and Hannibal were. The word "affair" seemed to stoke Will's anger even more, but he clenched his fists on the wall and refused to answer. He didn't want to give Hannibal the satisfaction of seeing him insecure. He knew exactly why the man was doing this. He refused to give in.

But Hannibal made it a lot harder for him when he reached in front and stroked Will's cock while pounding into him. Will closed his eyes, trying to gather himself, but the pleasure was overwhelming him. His body was a mess of contradictions. His heart and brain told him to hold on, but his body wanted to let go. He gasped, feeling Hannibal's cock slam into him and brush against his prostate. His mind and body were at war, and the former was losing.

"Tell me," Hannibal said, his voice somewhere between a whisper and a growl. When he was met with silence, he added, "Very well. I will make you come now. You know how to do that, don't you?"

Will could practically hear the smug smirk on the older man's face when he asked that. "Fuck you."

"Excuse me?" Hannibal's voice sounded borderline threatening.

"I... it was—"

"Watch your mouth, boy."

Hannibal hammered into him, squeezing his cock. Will gave a strangled groan as he came, spurting onto Hannibal's fingers and the floor. His entire body went limp as Hannibal kept

going with unyielding strokes, seeking his own release. After several thrusts, Will could feel the warm flood of his cum. But as far as Will knew him, he knew Hannibal wasn't done.

Hannibal spun him around and kissed his mouth, then lifted him with an impressive strength and perched his legs on his hips. Will's lips were red and swollen. He drank in Hannibal's intoxicating appearance: his silver hair falling to his face, his parted lips, heaving chest. The man was no less than a god. At least that was something Will could admit.

Bracing him against the wall, Hannibal slammed into him again. Will coiled an arm around Hannibal's neck as his body was rocked against the wall. His moans were unhinged and resounded in the room. His heated breath gusted over Hannibal's mouth. The older man stared at him with a hunger that was both terrifying and exhilarating. Will's eyes rolled back and he whimpered, feeling Hannibal's cock penetrate him deeper and deeper.

His own cock was hardening again. The sensation was almost too much for him to handle, despite having experienced it before. The second time Will came, it was a lot quicker than he anticipated. Creamy ropes of cum shot up onto Will's chest. Will's eyes were shut, his body trembling. Hannibal kept thrusting, even when Will's body went lax. It was painful and exquisite at the same time. Will felt like he was on a high, and he wasn't coming down for a while. He suspected this might be a punishment, or Hannibal just wanted him to say what he wanted to hear.

The more Will remained silent, the longer this torture went on.

"Say it, Will," Hannibal grunted. "Tell me what you felt. Tell me what the idea of Francis being intimate with me like this does to you. Does the idea of him fucking me ignite your temper? Do you wish to... hurt him? Or worse?"

Maybe it was a game to him, and now Will was caught in the middle. He bit his lower lip. He wouldn't give in, even when he was this overstimulated.

Hannibal brought him down to the ground, placing one of Will's legs over his shoulder, holding him in an angle so his cock hit his prostate each time. His hips moved aggressively, like he wanted to break Will, and maybe he did. But Will was too stubborn for his own good. He couldn't deny how much he enjoyed this. He knew he should be focused on the mission, but right now, all he wanted was to get railed. By Hannibal. No one else. He didn't care if he had to beg, he would do it. He would be a whore for this man.

Hannibal suddenly pulled out of Will, his cock still hard and dripping wet. Leaving Will on the precipice.

"What—" Will breathed.

"You haven't answered my question."

Will squirmed. "Come on."

"If I were you, I'd behave myself." Hannibal thrust into him again, but agonizingly slow.

"Hannibal—"

"I want to hear it."

The slow strokes weren't doing Will any favors. His cock throbbed and ached and spilled, begging for that release again. Sweat glistened on the bodies of both men. Will's hair was messy and damp, and stuck to his forehead. Finally... finally, he relented.

"Okay, yes! Yes, I fucking hated it. I would kill that son of a bitch if I saw him." Those words were unlike him, and yet, they came out in a single breath.

Hannibal smiled. His pride swelled knowing Will was so possessive. "Good boy."

He gave Will what he wanted and picked up the pace, slamming into him with all his strength until Will was spilling profusely onto himself, the sticky fluid streaking his body. The third orgasm was a lot more intense than the previous ones. Will's body was taut like a bowstring. He felt the warmth of Hannibal's cum gushing inside him like a flood again, and the way Hannibal grunted when he climaxed. It was both animalistic and human at the same time. They were both animals and there was no shame in that.

Hannibal leaned down and kissed him passionately, tasting the sweat on Will's lips, his tongue sliding into Will's mouth, devouring him. He kept kissing him even when the last drops of cum came out.

Will was always a beautiful sight after sex. Those matted, messy curls, dark lashes, parted red lips, the sweat shimmering, and not to mention his flushed, slick cock lying limply. Hannibal clearly had way more stamina from the way he still had strength to carry him in his arms bridal-style, up the stairs to the bathroom.

Will held on to him, exhausted, head resting on his shoulder. Hannibal carried him to the bathroom and placed him in the bathtub, then turned on the tap, filling the tub with warm water. The heat of the water soothed Will and he relaxed.

Hannibal's little sphinx-like smile didn't falter. He was still basking in the delight of knowing Will was possessive about him in some way. He took down the bottle of expensive shampoo from the shelf and squeezed some onto his hand, working up a lather. After the ferocity of the sex, he turned a complete 180 when it came to taking care of Will. He washed his hair and massaged his shoulders, bathing him. Practically spoiling him.

And then, meanwhile, from the shadows of the trees outside Hannibal's house, Francis stares at the building with a silent malevolence. He couldn't see much from where he stood, but he simply stared at the lights.

"Will Graham..." he said to himself, his lips curving up. "Such a beautiful lie you are."



# Behind Closed Doors

## Chapter Notes

Hello, everyone, I've been dealing with health issues, and trying to look out for my mental health. Thank for sticking with me so far and enjoying this fic :) Hope you enjoy this one



A satisfied moan escapes Will's lips. About the only thing that could beat the exhilarating sex with Hannibal was... a hot bath. In Hannibal's golden bathtub.

He could almost laugh at his fortune. A profiler-slash-secretary with a messed up life and a background even he wasn't proud of, was relaxing in a literal gold bathtub. The water was more than exquisite, soothing his sore muscles. Which was good, because he had no clue how he was supposed to go to work after Hannibal fucked the living soul out of him in the late hours of the night until Will was covered in cum and sweat, his body aching and trembling.

Will sighed as his knees breached the surface of the water when he bent them. The pleasure of the hot bath was amplified by Hannibal's expert hair massage. Hannibal sat by the bathtub on a small stool, his large hands covered in lather from the expensive shampoo he was applying onto Will's hair. Some earthy flowery scent, something like jasmines and roses. Whatever it was, it smelled like paradise for sure.

“You didn’t have to do this,” Will said, letting out another long sigh when he remembered he didn’t like people doing things for him. The man wasn’t used to being pampered or taken care of. When he finally came down to reality, all he wanted was to push Hannibal away and bathe himself. He even moved his head a bit, trying to get out of Hannibal’s hands.

But Hannibal tugged his hair slightly, enough to keep him in place. “I am doing this of my own accord. You’re right. I don’t have to. I *want* to.”

“It’s just—”

“It is my decision.”

“We’ll be late for work.”

“Work can wait.”

“You have a meeting—”

“I own the company. It runs as per my wishes. You need not be concerned. Besides, in my absence, Francis is taking over as Co-CEO.”

Will stiffened. If there was anything that could bring him down from his high, to planet earth, and get his head back into the Ripper case, it was that. He didn’t want to work in the same building as Dolarhyde, but Hannibal was the only one keeping him there. Keeping him sane, even. But how long would that anchor ground him? He was about to tear the ship right apart.

He swallowed, stomach churning with uneasy anticipation.

Hannibal washed his hair, and Will stepped out of the bathtub. Hannibal handed him a large towel to dry himself, then grabbed a smaller towel to dry his curls. Will felt his breath fanning over his neck, like Hannibal wanted to take in his scent, his essence.

“I believe I may have clothes that are your size,” said Hannibal.

“I don’t need anything expensive. A cheap shirt and trousers are fine,” Will replied.

“Will, you’re in my house. I don’t do cheap. Dry yourself and come to the bedroom. Your clothes will be on the bed.”

Hannibal kissed his shoulder and left the bathroom.

*Oh, the shirt had to be way too expensive.* As Will looked at the wine-red button-down that Hannibal had given him, bespoke, with the label having Will’s initials on it, Will was convinced the shirt probably cost more than his salary. The fabric was comfortable, soft, caressing his skin, and the black trousers that accentuated his waist and hips.

Hannibal waited for him downstairs, securing the clasp of his Patek Philippe watch with a click. Ever the fastidious man with his three-piece suits. This time it was a charcoal and blood red windowpane one with a white and red floral tie. Will had no clue how the man managed to pull off the most intriguing outfits and colors.

But Will's bubble soon burst when he and Hannibal arrived at the office, and the former was reminded of his mission.

Will couldn't shake the odd feeling like he was being watched. It could possibly be the nerves from executing a very risky plan, but his sixth sense was tingling. Now that Dolarhyde had joined the daily operations of the company after returning from his 'vacation', the discomfort grew tenfold. He felt like he had to be wary of the man. Have eyes at the back of his head.

During meetings, as Will sat adjacent to Hannibal, who sat at the head of the table, Dolarhyde was sitting right across from him, passing him icy blue side glances from time to time. Will tried hard not to pay any heed, but it wasn't entirely successful. He instead tried to fix his gaze on the board of directors, one of whom was speaking something that sounded muffled to Will's ears, because he couldn't bring his mind to focus. His forefinger languidly scratched the mahogany table. It wasn't just Dolarhyde's stare, it was also the steadily rising anxiety from the mission that churned in Will's stomach. Made him feel queasy.

His eyes lifted to the clock on the opposite wall, the seconds ticking by sounded loud to him. If everything fell apart after his mission, this might very well be the last "normal" office day. He then glanced at Hannibal, who was nodding and speaking to the directors, swaying and charming them with his words. Hannibal leaned back in his chair, swiveling a bit to the side so he could cross his legs, and passed Will a smile. A kind of smile that was exclusive to Will, as he was the only one who had the privilege of Hannibal's affection.

The meeting was over, and Will got about his work, waiting for evening to arrive. Time went so excruciatingly slow that he couldn't help but audibly huff at times.

But evening eventually did arrive. The plan was in motion.

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Hoffman was clearly displeased with the meeting being postponed. He wouldn't have even showed up if it wasn't for Hannibal successfully persuading him.

The elevators opened at the tenth floor, and Hannibal gestured to the hallway with his hand for Hoffman to proceed first. As the two of them walked, Hannibal stole surreptitious glances at the cameras in the hallway. Observed the corners and any place a bug or a microphone could be hidden. The potted plant, for example.

The thing was... he already had his suspicions about Will from the time Will volunteered to be head of security. Hannibal knew there were other motives behind that decision other than safeguarding him. He was never a man who let his guard down, even when faced with something that was the object of his desires. His obsession. Will was capable of deception. But so was Hannibal. And under the facade of sultry lovemaking, passionate kisses and gazes, slow dances, and intimate breaths, was a thread that tied them both. And that thread was so thin, its fibers slowly tearing.

The problem was that if this was just a sexual affair devoid of attachments, Hannibal would've ended Will's life in his sleep a long time ago.

But it wasn't, was it?

As Hannibal and Hoffman neared the meeting room at the far end, hidden behind opaque doors without any windows or openings, Hannibal did spot something in the potted plant near the door.

"After you," he said, opening the meeting room for Hoffman, who went in.

Once the investor was inside, Hannibal knelt by the plant, searched between its leaves until his fingers caught hold of something metal. Something glossy. Something like a bug. It was so well-hidden that it would've easily been overlooked. The only reason Hannibal found it was because he was looking for it.

He held up the miniature device between his forefinger and his thumb and smirked a little.

"You have been very naughty, Will Graham. Clever, clever boy."

He dropped the bug to the ground and crushed it under his shoe, before tossing it into a bin nearby. With an air of self-assurance, he makes his way into the meeting room and locks the door behind him.

"I seriously hope you got something good, Lecter," Hoffman sighed. "Because at this point, I'm simply growing more and more convinced that the competition is performing better than you and my investments with them might actually bear fruit."

"Patience, Mr. Hoffman. All in due time. Would you like some wine?"

Hoffman shrugged a little. "Yeah, sure."

Hannibal went to a cupboard, which contained various documents, folders, and a large bag at the bottom shelf, and took down a bottle of Chateau d'Esclans Whispering Angel Rosé, along with two glasses. He poured Hoffman a glass, which the latter sipped, then raised his brows in appreciation.

"Well, at the very least, your tastes are impeccable."

Hannibal bowed his head. "Always the best for my partners and friends."

"Is that what I am? Your partner?"

"It depends on you, Mr. Hoffman." Hannibal lifted the large bag from the bottom shelf and placed it on a chair which was obstructed by the table, so Hoffman couldn't see what was in the bag. "All I can do is introduce you to some of my company's projects, and hope that will convince you of my innovation and initiative." Hannibal took out a folded vinyl transparent suit and put it on. "After all, that is what you seek, is it not? Long-term gains?"

Hoffman frowned at the absurd attire. “Yes, that’s all well and good but what exactly are you about to do in... *that*? What, is it gonna rain in here?”

Hannibal chuckled, putting on a pair of gloves. “Not exactly. I meant to show you a model of my sustainable housing project, but I have to handle it with care.”

He walked to the corner of the room and picked up a large 3D model of a futuristic-looking building that looked straight out of science-fiction, and placed it in front of Hoffman. The intricacy of the infrastructure design did get Hoffman to uncross his legs and take a closer look at the details. He had never seen it before.

And he sure as hell did not see what was coming next.

He stared at the model. “Well, Doctor Lecter, I suppose I am interested in what you have to say.”

Hannibal casually walked behind his chair. “I’m glad.” And in a flash, grabbed Hoffman's chin and yanked his head back, slitting his throat with a scalpel.

Hoffman’s eyes bulged and his quivering hands moved up to his profusely bleeding throat, trying to stop the flow. His suit and shirt were stained in crimson while he choked and spluttered, his eyes rolling back.

Hannibal wiped his scalpel with a cloth. “You talk too much, Mr. Hoffman. If only we could’ve dealt with this in a civilized manner earlier on. Your fate would have been different.”

Before Hannibal made an elaborate tableau out of Hoffman, he first had to shift his body elsewhere. So he dragged Hoffman out of the chair and to the bookshelf, behind which were polished wooden panels. He gently pulled one particular book halfway out of the shelf, and there was a distinct click behind the shelf. He held the shelf and used his strength to pull it, swinging it open like a large door, to reveal a hidden elevator. One that led down to a parking garage concealed from the rest of the rest of the garage used by the company employees and everyone else. The garage could only be accessed through the elevator.

An elaborate set-up for Hannibal’s clandestine meetings that always ended up with a dead body. He dragged Hoffman through the elevator, pressing the single button marked ‘P3’. The doors closed and the car descended, opening to a garage where a single car stood with a cloth draped over it. Hannibal dragged Hoffman’s body with him and placed him on the ground, then pulled off the cloth from a black BMW.

It took some effort to drag the body into a large boot space, but since Hannibal had done it a hundred times before, Hoffman’s weight didn’t bother him. It was nothing compared to when he had killed both Burnham and Gordon that day and had to stuff them both in the trunk.

Hannibal shut the trunk, then went back into the elevator, up to the meeting room he came from. The evidence needed to be wiped clean. But these were occasions he was thoroughly prepared for. The large bag he had taken from the cupboard earlier, also contained cleaning materials—disinfectant, cloth, glass cleaner, among others. He was fastidious with the

cleaning, making sure every surface was shined, every spot of blood removed from the floor. All the dirty used cloth went into the car, taken somewhere along with the body, and burned. Every trace was eliminated and the meeting room looked like nothing ever happened. Such was the perfectionism of Hannibal Lecter.

Once he was done with his work, he removed his gloves and suit and returned the bag to the shelf in the cupboard, then stepped into the elevator, pulling the bookshelf shut behind him. All that without breaking a sweat. A supercilious smirk pushed his lips up. A clear lack of remorse or empathy on his face, such that he could be considered soulless. A demon.

*Who cares?*

The world knew nothing but talk. Words meant nothing to Hannibal. Besides, any critic or rude person was eventually killed and eaten, so... there wasn't a problem.

He went down to where his car sat, and got in. Rolling the window down, he reached for a button on the wall and pressed it. The platform his car stood on, rose upwards and the automated ceiling opened to give way to the rest of the parking lot. Even if the FBI got too nosy and ever decided to investigate the parking garage of the building, they would never find the BMW, which was concealed in a space under the parking lot.

Hannibal drove out of the lot and disappeared into the night.

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Will Graham entered the tenth floor cautiously, walking without a sound on the carpeted hallway until he came upon the plant at the corner of the door at the end. He knelt and parted the large plastic leaves, rummaging through them. His forehead puckered when he found the concealed bug he had placed there, missing.

"Shit," he muttered under his breath. Hannibal found out already.

He ran a hand through his curls in agitation. This wasn't something he was expecting, and was bound to have some serious consequences.

Right at that moment, the lights on the tenth floor suddenly blacked out. Will's heart skipped a beat and his hand immediately went for the holster on his belt. With his other hand, he scrambled to pull his phone out, looking for the flashlight button. The second he turned on the phone torch, a hand suddenly clamped over his mouth and nose from behind.

He felt a breath fan over his earlobe, sending goosebumps along his skin. And then a haunting voice spoke, "You are quite the pain, dear Will. You didn't think I'd find out?"

Will's eyes widened in the darkness as he tried to wriggle free. But two iron hands gripped his shoulders and flung him so hard to the wall that he slammed into it, his head hitting the surface hard before he crumpled to the ground.

A moment later, the lights came on and Will was disoriented. He groaned, wincing from the rush of pain in his body. His head spun as he glanced at the now empty hallway. His gun and

phone lay beside him while he reeled from the attack.

*What in the actual hell just happened?*

His phone then flashed and vibrated with the name 'BEVERLY' on the screen. He grabbed it, almost dropping it, then placed it to his ear. "B-Bev?"

"Are you alright?" she immediately sensed something was wrong.

"Yeah, I'm, uh, fine..."

"Most of the footage was obstructed by ... something, I don't know. But... I did get something." She sighed, but it sounded ominous. "You gotta get here now."

Will cut the call and winced, then picked himself up. He stumbled a bit, his head throbbing and the room spinning a bit before he managed to force himself into focus. He immediately took the elevator down to the lobby.

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As he drove, Will tried to wrap his head around what happened back there. But things were definitely not going as smoothly as he'd hoped. He gingerly touched a minor bruise on his forehead and winced at the sharp pain that shot through the area from the contact. He glanced at his palm to see a smear of blood on it.

"Damn it," he hissed.

The voice he heard while he was being attacked sounded both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. But what worried him was that someone potentially knew of his plans or at least that he was up to something. If Hannibal found out the truth now, to say it would be inconvenient would be an understatement.

Will pulled over in front of the BAU headquarters and got out, hurrying into the building. The bruise on his forehead wasn't as discreet as he wished it to be behind his curls. Beverly's eyes widened a bit and she frowned.

"What the hell happened?" she asked.

"Never mind it." He dismissed her. "Just show it to me."

"Okay.." She turned to the computer. "Like I said, the footage was obstructed by... this.. Thing?"

Will peered at the screen, at the camera recording that played, and there was something like a zipper obstructing the center, and the recording captured bits and pieces of other things here and there.

"Did you get anything?"

“Yeah, this,” she replied, pausing the footage at a frame.

“Is that—” Will’s mouth parted at what he saw. He couldn’t believe it at first, but the footage didn’t lie. He wished it did, though.

“... Is that Hoffman?”

# Stolen Pieces of Time

## Chapter Notes

- Thank you for sticking by me so far. Hope you enjoy the fic :)
- Life is being bitchy as usual, but I'm getting by 😭
- please feel free to comment. I would love to interact <3



~~~~~

The night seemed to last too long before the morning came.

Dolarhyde let out a contented sigh as the rich, amber liquid of the bourbon warmed his throat. The handcrafted crystal bottle, a Woodford Reserve Baccarat, sat before him like a precious gem. He relished the spicy and fruity notes that danced on his taste buds before sliding down his throat.

“This is a stress buster,” he declared. “Only the discerning can appreciate this exquisite bourbon. It was worth every penny.”

“People often flatter me,” Hannibal replied. “I confess, I have a talent for selecting the best poisons.”

“Indeed, you do. And your most recent poison of choice? Will Graham.”

Hannibal paused, his glass midway to his lips. “Are you going to say ‘I told you so’?”

“No, not at all. Even I couldn’t resist the boy’s charm. But no one is immune to your punishment if they get too close. I thought you would have killed him the moment he became your secretary.”

“I decided with a rational mind. I took him in regardless of the consequences.”

Dolarhyde smiled. “So it’s true then - love makes us do crazy things. Will Graham must possess a rare talent to have you this captivated in him.”

Hannibal leaned back in his chair, a subtle smile playing on his lips. “I saw myself in him. An extraordinary creature who denies their own darkness. All he needs is some nurturing.”

“It’s a shame you won’t be able to provide that.”

“I wouldn’t say that.”

“You came close to attacking him.”

“The attack was necessary.”

“We both know that. But was it worth what lies ahead?”

Hannibal paused, gazing out the window at the warm sunlight pouring through the panes. He closed his eyes, savoring the moment of peace. He understood everything that had happened and was to come, and he accepted it. However, Francis did not share his sentiments. To him, it was unfathomable that Hannibal would stray from his usual method of dealing with those who crossed him.

“Fell in love with the lamb, didn’t you?” Francis’ voice was low and raspy.

“My feelings are inconvenient,” Hannibal replied.

“Yes, they are. But they are also absolute.”

Hannibal met Francis’ gaze. “Yes, they are.”

“And they will be your downfall.”

Silence fell between them as Hannibal finished his whiskey. “Do you remember the plan, Francis? I expect everything to go as we’ve envisioned.”

“Unless Will decides to kill you.”

“He won’t.”

“You seem sure of that.”

“He is evading his own feelings. It won’t lead anywhere. At most, I’ll spend some time in BSHCI.”

Francis stared at the whiskey in his glass, deep in thought. He had been making preparations for their plan ever since Will began digging deeper into the case. It was a risky plan, one that relied on everything going according to Hannibal’s vision. Otherwise, everything could fall apart. But Hannibal’s overconfidence convinced him that all would go well. And even if it didn’t, Francis was willing to go to extreme lengths to defend Hannibal.

“You must know, Lecter,” Francis warned. “If Mr. Graham does anything unexpected, I won’t hesitate to do what you couldn’t bring yourself to do. Just like you sent me to... ‘warn’ him last night.”

Hannibal’s amber eyes met his intensely. “I understand.”

Will couldn’t shake the images from his mind. He sat hunched in a corner of the BAU lab, trying to process the footage he had seen. Each frame replayed like a nightmare, each detail etched into his memory. His fingers intertwined tightly as if they could hold him together.

Hoffman’s lifeless body bleeding from his throat was undeniable proof, but it only brought more questions swirling in Will’s head. And with each passing moment, the weight on his chest grew heavier, suffocating him. It felt like someone was squeezing the air out of his lungs, leaving him gasping for breath.

Beverly studied his face and offered a simple apology, but it did nothing to ease the turmoil in Will. “I’m sorry,” she repeated softly.

He shook his head, unable to accept her words. “There has to be an explanation,” he muttered.

“You were the one with suspicions all along,” Beverly reminded him gently.

“I wish I had been wrong,” Will replied bitterly.

“Maybe you need to take a step back,” she suggested cautiously.

But Will was resolute. “This is my case. I’ll handle it.”

“It’s becoming personal for you,” she pointed out.

A surge of anger ran through Will’s veins and he stood up abruptly. “Damn right it’s personal. I let him play me for a fucking idiot.”

“You couldn’t have known.” She paused. “And I sure as hell never thought you’d take things this far.”

Will shot her a glance. “So now it’s my fault?”

“I’m just saying that... our initial mission was kind of different...”

Will let out a bitter laugh that tasted like ash in his mouth. He knew exactly what she meant, but he couldn’t control his feelings for Hannibal. The man made him feel more alive than anyone else ever had, even though they had to play their roles of CEO and secretary.

So, perhaps he was a fool to turn a blind eye to the truth.

Feeling suffocated by the weight of his emotions, Will left the BAU office and walked aimlessly, needing some fresh air to clear his head. But just as he was lost in his thoughts, his phone rang and Hannibal’s name appeared on the screen. His stomach sank at the sight and he answered with a steady voice, trying to keep his emotions in check.

“Hannibal,” he said, unable to hide the raw edge in his tone.

“Will,” Hannibal’s voice was smooth but there was an underlying tension that Will could sense. “I believe we need to talk.”

Will wanted to mockingly laugh at the irony of those words. Here they were, finally having to talk about something that shouldn’t have gone this far.

And yet, despite the gravity of the situation and the weight of unspoken truths that hung between them, Will’s heart still managed to race at the sound of Hannibal’s voice. His fingers gripped the phone tight, his other hand tugged at the edges of his jacket restlessly.

“I agree,” he managed to say, his voice a mix of defiance and vulnerability. Every word felt painful now, uttered to the man who held his heart in one hand and his destruction in the other. Hannibal had already broken down his walls to a pile of rubble.

“I would like to invite you to dinner,” Hannibal said. “It would be best if it’s just the two of us.”

“Of course it is.” Will swallowed. “I’ll be there.”

He cut the phone without giving Hannibal a chance for last words. He had every chance to take a bunch of agents with him to Lecter Enterprises and arrest Hannibal, but for some reason, he didn’t want to make a move just yet. Hannibal most definitely knew that Will discovered the truth, so while a part of Will felt betrayed, the other part was curious to know what Hannibal would say.

Will glanced up at the overcast sky, as ominous as the road that lay ahead of him. This could easily either end up with Hannibal in prison or one of them dead. Will wasn't ready to face that.

The night was cool but not chilly, and the imposing structure of Hannibal's house looked like a harbinger of death on its own. Will rang the doorbell and waited, wearing a suit that Hannibal had gifted him. That, over a black shirt and matching slacks. He dressed like death himself.

Hannibal opened the door, his face unreadable as always, but there was a flicker of something in those amber eyes that Will couldn't quite place. Anticipation? But the man did seem unusually calm for someone whose dark truths had been exposed.

He greeted Will, his voice smooth and measured. "Thank you for joining me."

Will stepped inside, the air heavy with the aroma of delicious food. He felt the weight of the holster hidden behind his suit. It felt heavier than it should. The apprehension churning inside him masked his appetite. He didn't feel that hungry. He followed Hannibal into the dining room, where an exquisite table was set for two as usual. Candles flickered in ornate silver candle holders.

As they sat down, Will found it hard to meet Hannibal's gaze. He wore his glasses today, as he usually would when he wanted to avoid eye contact. Hannibal brought in the appetizers, and then the main course, which... ironically, was Red Wine-Braised Lamb Shanks.

Lamb.

Will did feel like a lamb led to slaughter. He stared at the food, which was cooked to perfection.

"I figured I'd make something special tonight," Hannibal said.

"It's delicious."

"I'm delighted to hear that you enjoy it," Hannibal said, taking a bite of the exquisite meal before him. He then took the wine glass, inhaling its aroma before taking a sip. "When I require solace, I often retreat into my Memory Palace. The core of it begins with the Norman chapel and expands from there, creating vast halls and long corridors that lead to individual rooms. Each room holds its own unique design and significance, representing important individuals in my life - past and present."

Will raised an eyebrow. "I assume I have a room as well."

A small smile played on Hannibal's lips. "In a special corner." He glanced around the dining room. "It looks much like this one, but the walls are adorned with photographs of you, and there are objects of personal significance on the mantelpiece—a pen, a fishing lure, among others."

As Hannibal described Will's "room" in his Memory Palace, Will listened with genuine curiosity, feeling something shift within his heart.

Hannibal's gaze dropped to the table. "In your room, the table is set with various dishes tailored to your liking. On your plate is a bleeding human heart." His eyes met Will's. "My heart."

Will paused mid-bite, feeling a tightness in his chest. His ribs seemed to constrict around his heart, making it difficult to breathe. He couldn't deny the ache in his stomach, though it had nothing to do with the food. This was a different kind of ache—one that spread to his chest. He couldn't tell if the bleeding heart represented that Will was wounding Hannibal, or that Hannibal had willingly offered it to him.

That... he was in love.

He couldn't shake the feeling of being simultaneously hurt and drawn in by the intensity of Hannibal's words. The taste of the food turned sour in his mouth as Hannibal watched him with unsettling serenity, as if he could read every tumultuous thought racing through Will's mind.

Silence settled between them, heavy and pregnant with unspoken tension. Will couldn't help but feel as though he was sitting inside Hannibal's Memory Palace.

"You intrigue me, my dear boy. I find myself irresistibly drawn to the darkness within you that you constantly deny. Your empathy is both a gift and a curse, your mind a labyrinth of light and darkness. I've never encountered anyone who resonates with me quite like you do."

Will took a moment to respond, his heart weighed down by what was to come tomorrow. "Likewise. I suppose I've never known myself as well as when I'm with you."

Hannibal gazed at him with an affectionate glint in his eyes. "In your room in my Memory Palace... there is something that occasionally appears on the table."

"What is it?"

"A gun."

Will's breath caught in his throat. Had he not concealed the gun well enough? Or did Hannibal know he was carrying one? It wouldn't be surprising if he did.

"Have you ever entertained the idea of leaving?" Hannibal asked. "Leaving it all behind. With me?"

"Running away together?" Will asked.

"I do take pride in my achievements and where I am today, but that doesn't mean I've never dreamt of other prospects. I'm not averse to starting new with you in a place no one can find us."

"What you ask of me isn't easy."

“Because you’re held back by your responsibilities. Your assumed responsibilities. You fear that if you gave in to your desires, you’d be embracing the darkness within you.”

Will put his fork and knife down and shook his head. “I’m not going to become like you.”

“No, not like me. You will become your true self. You cannot disown yourself.”

That was what both frustrated and scared Will—that Hannibal could be right. Every word the man uttered had its own power. It felt like tendrils wrapping around his heart, squeezing tighter with every confession. The idea of leaving it all behind, of abandoning the life he had known for something darker and unknown, was both terrifying and strangely alluring.

“What makes you think the world would let us be?” he said.

“What makes you think I care in the slightest about the world?” Hannibal’s reply to a question with a question was prompt, and had no room for an answer.

Will hated how he began questioning his plans, his actions, and intentions. Way after dinner, when the two men stood by the fireplace with glasses of cognac, Will couldn’t bring himself to enjoy the wine.

“I often think about the stories that surround Achilles and Patroclus,” Hannibal said. “How Achilles wished that all Greeks would die so that he and Patroclus could conquer Troy alone.”

“Patroclus went to war wearing Achilles’ armor,” Will added. “And died in his stead.”

“Yes. No love that’s real is without sacrifice.”

The orange glow of the fireplace danced upon Hannibal’s chiseled features, creating a halo of warmth around him. Will observed the way his lips parted as he sipped his wine, or how his nostrils flared with each inhale of the drink’s aroma. If only for those few minutes, there was a tenderness in Hannibal’s gaze, a longing that made Will’s heart ache.

As Hannibal took their empty glasses and placed them on the coffee table, he closed the distance between them until their breaths mingled. His hand wrapped around Will’s, bringing it up to his lips for a soft kiss. Will’s heart fluttered at the intimate gesture, even as his mind tried to make sense of Hannibal’s intentions.

At this proximity, the heat radiating off Hannibal’s body seeped into Will’s pores, rushing through his veins. The desire to pull him closer, to lose himself in Hannibal’s embrace and never let go, overwhelmed him. He wanted to surrender to their passion, to be consumed by Hannibal’s soul and escape the reality that tormented him endlessly.

If only things were different. If only they could run away to some foreign country where no one could find them. But for now, all they had were these surreptitious moments of intimacy and unspoken affection. They had tiny slices of stolen time to spend with one another while fate stood as a spectator, watching in amusement, knowing where they were headed.

The impact of these indescribable emotions couldn’t be put into words.

Because when the morning arrived, and Will had to do what his duty and his responsibilities told him to, nobody could fathom the storm in his heart.

As Will opened the door to Hannibal's office, his heart raced with anticipation. He expected a confrontation, perhaps even violence. But he found Hannibal calmly sitting at his desk, meticulously folding an origami paper heart. His beige plaid suit and perfectly groomed appearance were almost jarring in contrast to the tense atmosphere in the room.

Will hesitated before entering fully, watching as Hannibal finished his creation and finally looked up at him.

"Hello, Will," he greeted with a small smile.

"Mr. Lecter," Will addressed him coldly.

Hannibal chuckled. "I forgot to recommend a new aftershave for you."

Shaking his head, Will couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness. "There are so many questions without answers."

"Questions like... how am I the Ripper?" Hannibal asked knowingly.

"No," Will shook his head again. "Why did it have to be you?"

A small smile tugged at the corners of Hannibal's lips. "You would only ask that if I held a special place in your heart. A place where your true thoughts and desires are written in bold. Those confessions that your lips refuse to utter."

Will's eyes flickered to the window, revealing a single tear on his waterline. "My instincts screamed the truth at me when I first saw you. And my heart chose to ignore them."

"And I ignored your guise as my secretary," Hannibal added.

There was a brief pause before Will nodded slowly. "You knew."

Hannibal leaned back in his chair, studying Will with interest. "Come now, Will. Once a profiler, always a profiler. I knew exactly what your intentions were from the beginning."

"Then why didn't you stop me? Why did you let me in? Why did you trust me with things that could potentially destroy you? You made me head of security, gave me a gun..."

"I simply wanted to see what you would do," Hannibal replied calmly.

Will let out a bitter laugh. "I never thought I'd witness you slitting a man's throat in your own office building. And no one ever knew. People disappeared and no one questioned it. You played your part well."

Hannibal's forehead creased in curiosity. "That remains a curious mystery. I found the concealed camera in the plant."

"It was a decoy," Will revealed. "You wouldn't bother to check the buttons on the suit I brought for you for a hidden camera."

The realization dawned on Hannibal, a smile spreading across his face. "Clever boy."

"I have Beverly to thank for it." But then Will pulled out his gun, turning off the safety. "They're already here," he gestured towards the approaching FBI agents. "I still don't understand why you didn't fight back. Even Dolarhyde could see through my intentions. He could've killed me, but you didn't let him. Despite him being your supposed friend and protector. You just let everything play out as if it were some twisted form of entertainment for you."

As Hannibal stood up and walked towards him, Will instinctively pointed the gun at him, halting his approach.

"You're right," Hannibal's voice was calm and collected. "It was entertainment, and you were a fascinating character to observe. But you also took up a place in my life that I could never rid myself of."

Will couldn't believe what he was hearing. "You're just giving up your freedom for me?"

A dark glint flashed in Hannibal's eyes and his tone turned icy cold. "Who said I'm giving up my freedom?"

Despite the well-lit office, the presence of Hannibal alone seemed to darken the space around them. He continued to stare at Will without flinching, as if daring him to pull the trigger. Will's heart raced in his chest, his breaths coming in quick and shallow gasps. He couldn't quite explain the fear that crept up within him, even with a gun in his hand.

"I... I just want to know if any of it... us... was real," Will finally whispered.

But before Hannibal could respond, they were interrupted by the arrival of the FBI, led by Jack Crawford. Hannibal handed Will the origami heart, a symbol of their twisted relationship.

"This was real," he spoke, emphasizing on the words.

As Will slowly lowered his gun, his eyes never leaving the delicate paper heart, his own heart felt like it was being ripped apart. Each beat was agonizing, each breath labored.

Hannibal willingly surrendered, raising his hands and interlocking them behind his head. The whole time, his gaze never tore from Will. He maintained his smile, even as they forcefully yanked his wrists backwards and painfully cuffed them. He didn't wince. His focus was solely on Will, like nothing ever mattered.

"What a stunning creature you are," he spoke softly and with awe.

Hannibal's surrender was a conscious decision. Will didn't know what his motives were, or why he was so easily giving in. All he knew was how heavy and painful his chest felt.

As the FBI dragged Hannibal away, Will kept staring at the paper heart in his hand.

A single tear falls out his eye and dots the paper.

Back into the Game

Chapter Notes

Ughh, I feel so bad I'm not able to give this fic as much time as it deserves ;___; But I got a lot of mess to deal with, so I'm trying my best. I hope you enjoy this chapter <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)



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After Hannibal's arrest, Dolarhyde took over as CEO. There was no reason for Will to stay, and he suspected Dolarhyde would always keep a watch on him. He remembered the last time Francis looked at him, eyes blazing like blue fire, only waiting for the slightest provocation or reason to kill Will. Now that Hannibal wasn't there to defend Will, Francis could do whatever he wanted. Except... he had a plan to stick by.

The news of the Chesapeake Ripper hit TattleCrime faster than it could reach national news. Will could only imagine Freddie floating on the cloud of her own journalism glory. He could probably even hear her voice saying *'I told you so'*. For the first few days, Will did a fairly good job convincing himself everything that happened was for the better. But it didn't take long for the seemingly well-crafted illusion of a normal life to start cracking around him. There was no such thing as normal after Hannibal.

It was just... before him and after him.

But that didn't stop Will from trying to seal the cracks in his illusion of a life with Molly. She was warm, caring, and he figured he needed that. No more lies, no more deception, no more twisted relationships. He carried this on for a good one year.

He even invited Jack to dinner one night. But even Jack could see the conflict in Will's eyes, sitting near the dinner table while Molly spoke of the moments spent with Will in the past year.

"It's a beautiful home you have here," Jack said.

"Thank you." Molly smiled brightly. "It was all Will. He made a rundown cabin look like a proper home. Definitely a man of many talents, and many faces."

Will gave an awkward smile, and Jack eyed him, like he could sense the discomfort.

"The Ripper is no longer a problem," Jack said, seemingly on purpose to gauge Will's reaction.

Another awkward smile pushed Will's lips up, despite the fact that Jack's words twisted his insides. He took a breath, playing with his fork, searching for any excuse to leave the table for a moment. His eyes drift momentarily towards the bedroom, to the large drawer that contained letters from Hannibal he hadn't read yet. They piled up, but didn't collect dust. For some reason, Will was looking after them despite not having read them.

A rational course of action would be to read the letters then decide to either keep them or burn them. Will did neither, allowing the surreptitious enveloped papers and the words they held to fester in his heart and mind. Under the table, Will picked on a tiny lint on his pajamas. He kept passing smiles and uttering brief responses in order to seem normal.

Or as normal as he could.

But there was no normal. *Who the fuck was he kidding?* Molly was supposed to serve as a bulwark against the haunting images of Hannibal, but clearly it didn't work.

The way Jack kept stealing glances at Will made Will suspect that he sensed the turmoil. There was a weight in Jack's eyes that mirrored Will's own. But then again, Jack would only be here if he needed his help. Which was exactly what happened post dinner.

Will cradled a warm mug of hot cocoa, letting the warmth seep into his hands. The sweet taste of the drink was a comfort against the bitterness of the winter. Jack opted for coffee, despite it being eight pm. His gaze was locked on Will, as if expecting a response for something from him. Mist escaped Will's mouth as he stood at the threshold of the front door and stared at the pitch black snowy night.

"I left it all behind, Jack," he said.

"Did you?" Jack questioned.

“I’ve heard about the Tooth Fairy. But I cannot help you.”

“Regardless, I’ve kept the profile on your table.”

“In front of Molly? I don’t appreciate that.”

“I’m sure she already knows the nature of your job by now.”

“I don’t want to expose her to it.”

“Then help me.”

Will raised a brow. “Is that a threat?”

“A request.” Jack placed the mug down. “Unfortunately for you, nobody does the job like you.” He went down the steps of the house, walking to his car. “Besides, even if you didn’t want the case, the case definitely wants you. The Tooth Fairy left you a message.”

“Why me?”

“That’s for you to figure out.”

Will eyed the manila folder resting on the coffee table that Jack promptly left behind. He felt the familiar shadows envelop him when he opened it, eyes scanning through the morbid photos of dead victims with mirror shards placed on their eyelids. The case was a door beckoning Will back to the world he tried to abandon.

And rather conveniently, that door was also leading to a one-way path to the BSHCI. To Hannibal.

The manila folder ended up on Will’s lap. Molly leaned against the door, her face slightly falling at the sight of the folder and what it meant.

“The more you try to escape it, the more it comes after you,” she said.

“If I embrace it, I won’t come back,” he said, matter-of-factly. There was no use skirting around the issue.

She exhaled softly. “Eventually, you’d want to embrace it.”

Will met her gaze. Somewhere along the line, he knew their relationship felt like a smokescreen to his true life. To his fate. Even then, Molly already understood the unspoken words. She knew this was eventually bound to happen and it showed from the disappointment on her face. The fact that she was disappointed meant that a part of her wished it to be different. Maybe... go as far as wishing that Will never met Hannibal.

Will rose from the chair, not meeting her gaze. “You don’t want me to.”

“My words don’t matter,” she replied.

He looked at her. He wanted to just lay the truth bare, spill everything he got imprisoned in his chest. But... he also wanted to spare her any further heartbreak. There was no need to wound her if she hadn't done anything wrong other than committing the mistake of loving him, despite knowing he would never reciprocate those feelings.

As night fell, and Molly was asleep while Will struggled to, he heard a sound. At first, he probably thought it was one of the dogs. But it sounded like the creak of the floorboards when someone walked on them. He sat up, slipping out of Molly's embrace and the blanket, and padded outside the room.

The darkness was ominous as it was. Will's eyes tried to adjust to the darkness, as he picked up his rifle. He glanced at the dogs, doing a quick head count, before leaving the house. He crossed the snow, treading into the woods with his rifle at the ready. There was the occasional snapping of a twig that made him turn. He thought he saw something move, but couldn't tell if he was just seeing things.

He sensed something coming at him with speed. Just as he turned, he caught a momentary glimpse of a dark figure lunging at him and tackling him to the ground. Will hit the snow and lost grip over his rifle. The man above him grunted as he raised a knife and tried to bring it down on him. Will immediately stopped the knife with his arm, both men struggling against each other. The blade glinted in the moonlight, inching closer and closer to Will's throat.

Will grabbed the snow, trying to find something solid. He found a rock and bashed it into the man's face. The man growled and moved off Will.

Both men scrambled to their feet and faced each other. And in the moonlight, Will caught a glimpse of the man's face.

Dolarhyde.

Will froze momentarily. "How the hell did you find me?"

"I've been keeping watch ever since Hannibal was arrested." Dolarhyde gingerly touched his forehead where the rock had injured him and licked the blood off his fingers. "Hard to do much when you're CEO."

"So you just watched me for a year?"

"I was waiting for the right time. Preparing, while building a... reputation, so to speak. I mean, that's why Jack needed your help."

It took Will a moment to put it together. "You're the Tooth Fairy."

Dolarhyde merely smirked.

Will's breaths were heavy from the struggle. "Why would you even show yourself? Figured you'd want to play cat and mouse a little longer."

"If it were up to me, I wouldn't play cat and mouse." Dolarhyde's voice lowered to a growl. "I would've killed you the second you left Lecter Enterprises. Unfortunately... that isn't a

part of the plan. Hannibal's waiting for you."

He didn't let Will speak any further, nor stuck around to answer questions. He left the woods as he came. Picking up his rifle, Will hung the strap on his shoulder and walked home.

*Hannibal was waiting...*

Well, he certainly sent a hell of a message.

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The next morning, Molly watched silently as Will put on his jacket and left in his car. She could run and stop him, because it might possibly be the last she saw of him. But as she deliberated over what to do, his car was already rolling away in the snow, leaving her at the threshold of uncertainty and regret. Then again, Will had his fair share of regret too. He stole glances of her in the rearview mirror, his mouth parting as if to say he was sorry. Sorry he dragged their relationship for so long when he knew it was doomed to fail.

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The hallways of the BSHCI felt claustrophobic. Will could hear the echoes of his footsteps, carrying him closer to an uncertain fate. His body moved without his consent, even as his mind tried to stop him. He entered the hall that held Hannibal's grand glass cell. His eyes raked over Hannibal's white jumpsuit-clad figure, the man's back turned to him as Hannibal was browsing through some newspaper articles.

Will's footsteps reached Hannibal's ears and the man turned around, his salt-and-pepper hair having been cropped. Hannibal's lips stretched into a smile that made his eyes crinkle.

"Hello, Doctor Lecter," Will said, wanting to keep it impersonal. But the way he clutched the manila folder tight in his hand spoke otherwise.

"Hello, Will," Hannibal's voice rumbled. "It's good to see you again."

One year.

One fucking year and these two circled right back to each other, thus proving that not even heaven and hell could keep them apart. For better or for worse.

"How's your girlfriend?" Hannibal asked, voice cool yet scathing.

Will expected that question. He smirked ever so slightly. "She's fine."

“Safe from the tooth fairy?”

Will's eyes narrowed.

“Fate and circumstance have brought us together, it seems,” Hannibal added, hands behind his back.

“I wouldn't be surprised if you were the puppet master controlling fate by the strings,” Will said. “Everything feels orchestrated. Like I was supposed to come here eventually, according to plan.”

Hannibal smiled, his eyes dropping to the folder in Will's hand. “Back into the game, I see.”

“You wanted me back in the game. Dolarhyde was just a willing player.”

Hannibal approached the plexiglass, hands slowly moving to his sides. “I waited, Will. A long time. I counted each second of each minute, of each hour, each day. Days to months. Month to a year. You did not give me much of a choice. I hoped you would come someday.”

Will swiped his tongue over his bottom lip. “And why the fuck should I? Hm? I mean... God.” Will turned elsewhere for a second, trying his best to suppress the rising flames of his anger. “For once in my life, I wanted to be wrong. That you weren't the Ripper.”

Hannibal gave that signature smile. The smile that reflected something forbidding and yet never gave anything away from his thoughts. You'd sense he was up to something but you could never be too sure. Never could predict. Never could read. Even for someone like Will who had a vivid, visceral insight into the minds of killers, it was hard to tell what road Hannibal would take.

Hannibal never missed an opportunity to be the devious wisenheimer he was. “It's a dance, isn't it? A dance of truth and deception. You wear your lies like a second skin, but they never did fit you well.”

Will's jaw clenched, his defiance marred by vulnerability. “I'm not here to dance, Hannibal.”

“But you are. You've been dancing all along. Tell me, does it still play in your head? The sound of your own denial?”

“Fuck you.”

Hannibal chuckled a little. “You've always known. The truth is a mirror, and you've been looking into it every time you think of me. What do you see there? Can you face it?”

Will looked away, his voice barely above a whisper. “All I see is a monster.”

“And yet, here you are, drawn to the flame once more. Does the moth blame the flame for its inevitable demise, or does it accept the searing embrace of its destiny?”

Will's eyes met Hannibal's. “This isn't destiny. It's a mistake.”

Hannibal's expression softened, almost imperceptibly. "Is it? Or is it the most honest thing you've ever done? Coming here, facing me, facing yourself. You say mistake, I say inevitability. We are two halves of a whole. Inextricably linked by a bond deeper than your conscious mind dares to admit."

Will's Adam's apple bobbed. He hated, *hated*, the way Hannibal destroyed his walls and forced his soul to the surface. "Stop it."

"Stop what? Stop showing you the truth? You came here trying to prove a point, yet all you've found is a doorway to what you truly desire." Hannibal's voice turned softer, like a seductive caress. "You want the freedom to be who you are, without the shackles of societal norms. With me, you are unbound, unfettered. With her, you are merely a shadow of your potential."

Classic guilt-tripping tactic. It surprised Will, almost fascinated him how, despite knowing that, he still couldn't prevent Hannibal from getting into his head. He attempted to mask his vexation with a breathy laugh, to no effect. "You don't know what I want."

"I know you better than anyone. Better than you know yourself. If it requires patience, then I will wait, as long as it takes, for you to see that what you want... is *me*."

Will closed his eyes, moving to the slot on the prison glass, where he placed the folder on a tray and pushed it to Hannibal. "Dolarhyde mentioned something about a plan. I'm assuming that plan is yours."

Hannibal glanced at the folder but didn't bother picking it up. "Why don't you face your own truth first, Will? And I'll tell you mine."

Will couldn't tell him what he wanted to hear. A large part of him blamed himself for getting close to Hannibal despite his suspicions of him. He felt like he had committed a crime by ignoring his instincts for something that was clearly against what he stood for. He hated that the intimacy between him and Hannibal felt right. That it took Will's so-called rules and beliefs and knocked them down like a house of cards.

He tore away from Hannibal and left the place without another word. Hannibal watched his retreating figure, unfazed.

As Will walked to the exit, slightly hurried, an orderly stood leaning against the wall, smirking at him.

"Big fan, Mr. Graham," the orderly said.

Will stopped and frowned. "Excuse me?"

The orderly shrugged and pushed away from the wall, sauntering towards Will. "I ... admire your work."

Will stiffened at how close the man got, eyes lecherously drinking in Will's appearance. He inched his face away from the man, but was also ready to throw punches if necessary. The

orderly kept his hands in his pockets, tilting his head. Will caught a quick glimpse of the name on his ID: 'Matthew Brown'.

"Can't say I'm flattered," Will replied. "Now if you'll excuse me—"

"Oh, I could be of service, Mr. Graham. Whatever you want." Matthew winked.

He looked like he belonged in one of the prisons.

Will sighed. He had enough lunacy for one day, he would like to go home to his dogs and have a fucking glass of whiskey. He blatantly ignored Matthew and continued on to the exit, not stopping or even reacting to Matthew shouting 'big fan!' behind him.

Yeah, the wonderful life of Will Graham, where he was either surrounded by serial killers or lunatics, or both.

Add perverted orderlies to that list.

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Of all the visitors Hannibal has had in the past year, Will was the rarest, and the one he had been looking forward to. Aside from him, the only other person to occasionally visit was Alana Bloom. A year made a lot of difference to her too. Her hair was cut short, hanging in waves around her. The... unease and paranoia she had felt whenever she met Hannibal in the initial years of his imprisonment have somewhat mellowed, but not completely gone.

"How's Margot?" Hannibal asked, sketching a portrait of Alana while a glass of wine sat near him.

Alana sat on a chair on the other side of the glass, tilting her head. "She has agency now that Mason's dead."

Hannibal half-smirked. "Hm, the sweet taste of revenge. Must be good to escape the confines of Lecter Enterprises and live an apple pie life."

Alana rolled her eyes, and sipped her wine. "I was blind the whole time I worked for you. I even chose to defend you when Will was suspicious of you."

She remembered the moment when Hannibal was arrested and taken along the lobby of the building to the police. She remembered Hannibal's cold eyes boring into hers, the chill that ran up her spine. She gripped the wine glass a bit tighter.

"Did Will's visit go well?" she asked, wanting to escape her thoughts.

"More than well," Hannibal replied, glancing at the portrait he drew. "I'm expecting a friend right about now."

That moment, Alana sensed a presence and turned around to see Dolarhyde come in, all cleaned up in a dark suit. Honestly, the man's mere presence could even intimidate a demon.

"Ms. Bloom," he greeted, lifting Alana's hand and pressing a chaste kiss on the back of it. "Pleasure."

She swallowed, stomach churning a bit at his gaze. "I'll leave you two alone." She left the wine glass on the floor and left. Francis picked it up, took a sniff and sipped from the side Alana's lips had touched.

"Exquisite," he said, in a way that was definitely not creepy at all.

"I hope you didn't touch his face." Hannibal pushed his drawing papers to one side of the table, neatly, before facing him.

"Don't worry, I kept his face intact for you," came Francis' reply.

Hannibal raised a brow.

Francis sat on the chair and crossed his legs. "You do realize the only way our plan would even work is if you're out of this... privileged prison of yours."

Hannibal rose from his seat, approaching the glass. "Focus on the preparations. We might need... bodies."

Francis was possibly the only person in the world who could comprehend Hannibal's needs without him having to say much. Indulging in the most morbidly thrilling activities sent an invigorating rush of adrenaline through his veins. As the Tooth Fairy, he basked in his infamy, not yet ready to step out of the spotlight. It was fun watching the FBI running around on a wild goose chase. Free entertainment.

As for Hannibal, he knew he would get out of prison soon. Very soon. He wasn't worried.

Except... he had no clue how exactly it was going to happen.

## Chapter End Notes

You know when Matthew Brown makes an appearance, things are gonna get uh... weird.

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